

The Constitution of Grace Baptist Church

Adopted:

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Grace Baptist Church, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves:

ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church shall be Grace Baptist Church of South Hill, Virginia.

ARTICLE II: AFFILIATION

SECTION 1: Headship of Christ: We acknowledge no ecclesiastical authority other than our Lord Jesus Christ, who is Head of the church (Eph. 5:23) and who directs the affairs of the church through elders chosen and ordained according to the precepts of Holy Scripture. The elders themselves at all times and in all their activities stand under the authority of Holy Scripture.

SECTION 2: Mutual Assistance: Grace Baptist Church may and does cooperate with other like-minded churches in matters of mutual interest and concern. We may seek the assistance and counsel of other churches in matters of special concern to us, but the decision of no other church or group of churches shall at any time be acknowledged as binding on this church.

ARTICLE III: PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to glorify God in promoting His worship, evangelizing the lost, and edifying saints. Therefore, as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15), we are committed to the proclamation of God's Word and gospel grace through all the world, to the defense of "the faith once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3), to the pure and faithful celebration of the means of grace of the new covenant, and to the fruit of the obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 15:26) through the Holy Spirit and for our obedience, love and honor of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, love for God, love for our fellow believers, and love for others. "Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." (Eph. 3:21).

ARTICLE IV: ARTICLES OF FAITH

Subordinate to Scripture, our Confession (Statement of Faith) is based partially on the *1833 New Hampshire Baptist Confession*, the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*, the *Nicene Creed*, and the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

1. We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
2. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man, yet without sin. He honored the divine law by his personal obedience; and by his death made a full atonement for our sins. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is

- seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.
3. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. The divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is One, their glory equal, their Persons unmixed, their Being indivisible, their majesty co-eternal.
 4. We believe that the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets and apostles; that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter; that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried. We affirm the *Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy and Biblical Hermeneutics* of 1978.
 5. We believe that humanity was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all humanity are now sinners. The inability of fallen people to fulfill God's precepts arises from their love of sin and their willful refusal to be subject to the rule of God. Being spiritually dead, humanity is utterly devoid of that holiness required by the law of God, inclined to evil, and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin without defense or excuse.
 6. We believe that the salvation of sinners is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone; that in the substitutionary, atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ, he bore God's wrath toward sin for the saints, through which his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that justification includes the pardon of sin, reconciliation, and the promise of eternal life; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God.
 7. We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that it is a resurrection from spiritual death; that it is effected by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the Word, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel and that its fruits are repentance, faith, and newness of life.
 8. We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God. Whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy, at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.
 9. We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance, and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.
 10. We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work begun in regeneration,

- and carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, through the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, the ordinances, and prayer.
11. We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.
 12. We believe in one, holy, universal and apostolic Church; that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word; that its scriptural officers are overseers or elders or pastors, and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.
 13. We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relationship, and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the Church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ, preceded always by solemn self-examination.
 14. We believe in the sacred duty and blessing of weekly assembling for worship and that assembling together is not to be forsaken; that we are to sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, devoting ourselves to the public reading of scripture, heeding scriptural officers who are keeping watch over our souls. There should be devout observance of all the means of grace, both private and public, including the preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of God, and by preparation for such time and activities.
 15. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society, and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth.
 16. 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. All such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse. This distinction holds among men both in life and after death.
 17. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come; that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final judgment; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell.

We also affirm the *1689 Baptist Confession*, (www.the1689confession.com), with the following four exceptions:

1. The infant and incapable assertions in [Of Effectual Calling, chapter 10:3].
2. The identity of antichrist assertion in [Of the Church, chapter 26:4].
3. The "Lord's Day" and the "Christian Sabbath" assertions in [Of Religious Worship and the Sabbath Day, chapter 22:7].
4. Divorce Exceptions: We affirm the marriage statements as expressed in [Of Marriage, chapter 25] of the *1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*. To these excellent affirmations of marriage as a lifelong covenant, we adopt the following two exceptions drawn from

the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, chapter 24, paragraphs 5 and 6. 1. In the case of adultery in marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to seek a divorce and after the divorce to remarry just as if the offending party were dead (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:9; Rom. 7:2-3). 2. Although the corruption of mankind is such that people are apt to seek arguments to justify unwarranted separation of those whom God has joined together in marriage, nothing but adultery or such willful desertion as cannot be remedied by the church or the civil authorities is sufficient cause to dissolve the bond of marriage (Matt. 19:8-9; 1 Cor. 7:15; Matt. 19:6). In such cases a public and orderly procedure is to be observed, and the persons concerned are not to be left to their own wills and discretion in their own case (Deut. 24:1-4).

The ultimate authority in all matters of faith, order, and morals is and must be the Bible alone, as articulated in the opening article of the Confession itself. This confession is, however, a summary of "the things most surely believed among us." We accept it not as an infallible rule or code of faith, but as an assistance to us in doctrinal definition, a confirmation in faith, and a means of edification in righteousness. Here the members of our church will have a body of theology in compact form and by means of scriptural proofs will be ready to give a reason for the hope that is in them (1 Pet. 3:15).

Resolution on Sexuality and Marriage:

Whereas, stated in these bylaws is our commitment to fidelity and submission to the scriptures as "the divine revelation of the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried."

Whereas we believe, that the cultural term 'marriage' has only one meaning that is consistent with the sanction of God as delineated in Scripture: the joining of one man and one woman in an exclusive union.

Whereas we believe, that God created human sexual intimacy within marriage for purposes of his glory and to provide his direction for sexual expression of humankind. Human flourishing, natural reproduction, and the physical joining of two persons into a single covenant union are also stated as purposes.

Whereas we believe, scripture teaches that any form of sexual intimacy outside of the purposes for which God created is sexual immorality. Examples of sexual immorality include but are not limited to adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, polygamy, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, any attempt to change one's sex, and refusal to live and behave in accordance with one's biological sex. Sexual immoralities are sinful and offensive to God.

Whereas we believe, that God through the gospel and the work of the Holy Spirit offers redemption and restoration to all sinners who will believe on Christ. It is by God's mercy and grace that all who believe will receive forgiveness and restoration through the finished work of Jesus Christ in atonement for sin.

Be it therefore resolved, that in order to preserve the Christian distinctiveness, biblical faithfulness and integrity of Grace Baptist Church of South Hill, Virginia as a local body of Christ we feel that we must speak to this important issue. In order to be a biblical role model to our church members as well as the community it is imperative that all persons specifically employed by this church in any capacity, as well as those who serve as

leadership volunteers, shall affirm this Resolution on Sexuality and Marriage and conduct themselves accordingly.

Be it also resolved, that pursuant to the Scriptures and these bylaws, membership within our church will not be extended to those living in unrepentant sexual immorality and that any church member who involves himself in unrepentant sexual immorality should understand he has subjected himself to appropriate and loving church discipline. Church discipline is intentionally focused on restoration and follows the teachings of our Lord Jesus recorded in Matthew chapter 18 and the Apostle Paul's letters known as 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians.

Be it further resolved, that our pastoral staff shall not officiate any union, nor shall our facilities or property be used for any union ceremony or any other celebration involving unions other than those of a biological man and a biological woman. Further, our church shall not recognize any other "marital unions" as biblically valid.

Let it finally be resolved that we shall seek to treat individuals involved in sins of sexual immorality as sinners who, like us, all are in need of restoration with God. We will lovingly point them toward the repentance called for by God. We will seek to interact with all persons in a godly way. We will treat kindly and fairly those involved in any sin, including sexual immorality, calling them to repentance and restoration with God and the church. We will seek to lovingly embrace repentant persons with a spirit of restoration and humbly endeavor to exemplify the fruits of the spirit in all relations with one another as Scripture calls believers to do.

Genesis 1:2-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Proverbs 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 9:9; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:5-9; John 3:1-21; Romans 1:18-32; 6:23; 5:8; 10:9,10; 1 Cor. 6:9-20; 7:1-16; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 2:8-10, 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7; 1 John 1:9

ARTICLE V: CHURCH COVENANT

Having been brought by God's gracious mercy to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ in salvation together with the other members of this local body of believers at Grace Baptist Church, we solemnly and joyfully covenant to walk together united to him as one body to his glory. We, therefore, in his perfect love, by his grace, and through his Holy Spirit sincerely agree:

- That in brotherly love we will remember one another in prayer, encourage each other in our Christian walk, carefully watch over one another, and faithfully warn, exhort, admonish, and forgive our fellow members as the occasion may require – John 13:35; 1 John 4:7-8; Eph. 4:29-32; 6:18; James 5:16; Col. 3:12-16; 1 Thess. 5:13b-15; Gal. 6:1-5,10; Matt. 6:14-15.
- That we will not, unless providentially hindered, forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but will uphold the public gatherings of the worship of God with his people and the ordinances of His church – Acts 2:41-47; Heb. 10:19-25; 12:1; 13:1,15-17.
- That we will not omit our own personal and family religion at home, nor neglect the spiritual training of our children and those under our care for the salvation of their souls and the enjoyment of our Lord – 1 Tim. 4:7-8; Prov. 22:6; Deut. 6:1-9; Eph. 6:4; Josh. 24:15.
- That as a light in this world and as salt in the earth, we will seek God's help to deny all ungodliness, and worldly lusts, so that we might walk in a manner worthy of our calling as Christians, holding forth the Word of life to all around us – Matt. 5:14-16; Titus 2:11-15; Eph. 4:1-3; Phil. 2:14-16.
- That we will strive for the purity and the propagation of the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ – Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; Rom. 1:16-17; 10:9-17.

- That we will cheerfully and generously contribute of our personal and material resources according to that which God has given: to maintain a faithful and biblical ministry among us, to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth, and to show benevolence to the poor and needy – 1 Chron. 29:11-14; Prov. 11:24-26; 2 Cor. 8-9; 1 Cor. 16:2; Gal. 6:10.
- That the ultimate authority in every area of life is to be the Word of God alone by which we shall strive to live under ... to the glory of the Lord – Mat. 4:4; 22:29; 5:17-18; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12-13.
- That we shall joyfully submit to the God-appointed leaders and to the other members of this church for the sake of the well-being and unity of this body – Heb. 13:17; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; Phil. 2:2-11; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; Eph. 5:21; Gal. 6:1-2,9-10.
- That we recognize that any willful and continued abuse of the privileges bestowed upon us as members of Grace Baptist Church shall result in partial restriction of or the total withdrawal of privileges of membership according to the biblical mandate – Matt. 18:15-18; Rom. 16:17-20; Titus 3:10-11, 2 Thess. 3:6,14-15.

ARTICLE VI: MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1: Privileges of Membership:

1. Right to the pastoral oversight and care of the elders of the church.
2. Legitimate expectation of intimate fellowship with the members of the church.
3. Participation in the Lord's Supper.
4. Attendance at, participation in, and voting during, business meetings.
5. Participation in ministries under the church's oversight.

SECTION 2: Requisites for Membership: Any person who professes repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, who manifests a life transformed by the power of Christ, who has been baptized upon profession of his faith, who manifests a willingness to be taught and is in substantial agreement with what he or she already knows concerning the church's doctrine, who is willing to submit to its government, and who is not under the biblically warranted corrective discipline of a church shall be eligible for membership in Grace Baptist Church (Acts 26:20; 20:21; Eph. 2:8 10; Heb. 13:17; Matt. 28:19,20).

SECTION 3: Types of Membership:

Each member of the church is acknowledged to form a vital part of the body and to have a particular function in the life of that body (I Cor. 12:14 27). Practical considerations, however, require that certain distinctions be recognized in the membership of this church.

A. Regular Members: All who are received into the membership of the church according to the procedures set forth in Section 3 of this Article, who continue in regular attendance at the stated meetings of the church, and who do not come under the corrective discipline of the church as set forth in Article VII, Section two (2), shall be considered regular members in good standing and entitled to all the rights and privileges of membership (Acts 2:37 47).

B. Membership under Special Circumstances: Regular members who move away from our area and who cannot find another local church with which they can conscientiously unite will, at their request, be retained as members of this church. Such persons must maintain regular communication with the elders in order to maintain their membership in it. Nevertheless, they are urged to diligently seek a church with which they can unite elsewhere. Such a member shall not be allowed to vote in any congregational meeting of the church. At the discretion of the elders, such membership may also be granted to invalids, shut-ins, Christian workers and others whose relation to the church involves unusual circumstances. Members of other churches who come to live in our area for a limited period of time

(e.g., students, military personnel, persons on special work assignments) may be received into or removed from the membership of the church on the same basis and in the same manner as persons who have permanent residence in our geographical area. Such a person need not be released from the membership of his "home church" but will be regarded as a member while in our midst, enjoying all the privileges, performing all the duties, and submitting to all the responsibilities of regular membership. When such a person terminates his period of temporary residence, he will be released to the fellowship of his "home church" and no longer be regarded as a member of this church (compare: Acts 18:27; Rom. 16:1,2; II Cor. 3:1f; Col. 4:10; III John 5 10). If such persons decide to live in our area permanently and to end their membership in their former "home church," they may request to be regarded as a regular member of this church. Such regular membership will begin once their membership in their former "home church" has ended. A letter will be sent to the "home church" informing it of the new status of all who begin or end such special membership in this church.

SECTION 4: Procedures in the Reception of New Members:

A. Application for Membership: A person who desires to become a member of this church should speak to an elder to be interviewed by him. During the interview, the elder will seek to determine whether that person has a credible profession of faith in Christ, has been scripturally baptized, is in substantial agreement with the doctrines of the church, and intends to give wholehearted support to its ministries and submit to its discipline. Mastery of the church Confession (Statement of Faith) is not required of any new disciple before the church admits him into membership. Such a requirement would violate the order of Matt. 28:19, 20, which instructs us to disciple, to baptize, and then to teach the baptized disciple to observe all things Christ has commanded. It is necessary, however, that any disciple applying for membership display a willingness to be taught and be in substantial agreement with what he already knows concerning the church's doctrine and government, and the following Basic (Essential) Doctrines will need to be affirmed:

- 1) I believe the Bible as contained in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments is the inspired (God-breathed out), inerrant (without error), authoritative, and only rule of faith and obedience.
- 2) I believe there is one and only one God, and he has revealed himself to us in the Scriptures as a personal being existing eternally in three persons (the divine Trinity): God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit.
- 3) I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, begotten of the Father before all worlds, very God of very God, willingly humbled himself in love for mankind, was born of a virgin, fully human. He lived a sinless life, died a substitutionary, atoning death on a cross. Three days later he rose bodily from the dead. He ascended into heaven and now intercedes for his people at the right hand of His Father. He will one day return bodily to the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords.
- 4) I believe a person is saved, or justified (declared right with God), by an act of God's free grace and not on any merit of the person. God pardons his sins and accepts him as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed (credited) to us (through Christ's substitutionary atoning death and bodily resurrection) and received sola fide, by faith alone.

5) I believe that those who are justified will live eternally in the presence of God with all the redeemed, and those who are not justified will suffer eternal damnation in hell.

It is necessary that the proposed member understands the Basic (Essential) Doctrines given above and is in general and substantial agreement with the doctrinal beliefs of our church. To gain this purpose, the prospective member will need to become generally familiar with the Confession of this church. It is not expected that every new member (especially a recent convert) understand all the doctrines we believe, but there must be a general soundness in faith, and a humble willingness to learn God's truth, together with a determination not to sow any discord in the church with regard to any doctrinal matters in which the prospective member might be in disagreement with the church.

B. Current Members of Other Churches: If the applicant is or has been a member of another church, special effort will be made to determine the person's standing in that church and his reasons for leaving. At the discretion of the elders, a letter of inquiry concerning the person's standing may be sent to that church before his acceptance as a member in this church is determined. Reception by transfer does not negate any of the requisites for becoming a member in this assembly.

C. Congregational Responsibility: If the elders are satisfied that the applicant meets the requisites for membership, they shall announce the same to the congregation at a stated meeting of the church. The applicant's name will be announced at least three (3) consecutive weeks at stated meetings of the church. This time will be allowed for objections or questions to be raised by any member concerning the applicant's manner of life or doctrine. If no objection is raised which the elders consider to be valid, the person will be publicly presented for membership at a stated meeting of the church. At that time, the applicant will be asked the following questions:

1. Do you acknowledge that you are a sinner, justly deserving God's wrath, and without hope apart from his sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is God's Son and the only Savior of sinners, and do you rest on his death and righteousness alone for your salvation?
3. Do you promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will live a life worthy of a follower of Christ?
4. Do you submit yourself to the Constitution of this church?
5. Do you promise to faithfully support this church including its worship and work and submit to its government to the best of your ability?

After the candidate has answered these questions, the church will have opportunity to affirm its approval of the candidate's membership by the corporate "Amen."

The elders may postpone the reception of a person into the membership until proper investigation can be made concerning objections which in their judgment, in the light of Scripture, are sufficiently serious (Matt. 3:6 12; Acts 9:26,27; I John 4:1; Rev. 2:2).

SECTION 5: Termination of Membership:

A. By Physical Death: When a member of the church is removed from our midst by death, his name shall automatically be removed from the membership roll.

B. By Transfer: When it is so requested, the elders may grant to a departing member in good standing a letter of dismissal to the fellowship of another church. No such letter may be given to a member who is at the time under the corrective discipline of this church. The elders may refuse to grant a letter of transfer to any church which is in their judgment disloyal to "faith

which was once for all delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3) or which does not exercise godly care over its members.

C. By Resignation: As a rule, members may resign from membership. Members should do so in an orderly way by first consulting with the elders. A resignation offered by a member guilty of sin which warrants corrective discipline is invalid, and the church shall proceed with appropriate disciplinary action. When the elders judge that the church has no further disciplinary business with the member, the resignation (if not withdrawn) will then be accepted.

D. By Dismissal: Occasionally, a person's membership may need to be terminated under circumstances which make both transfer and corrective discipline inappropriate. In such circumstances a member may be dismissed. Dismissal may be initiated either by the request of a member to the elders, or by the elders themselves when a member ceases to maintain vital contact with this church. In either case, the final decision regarding the action of dismissal will lie with the elders. Church membership is a very serious matter. Members, therefore, shall be dismissed only after due inquiry and admonition by the elders, whenever such contact is possible. Before any individual is dismissed, the church shall be informed of the intention of the elders to dismiss the individual. This information must include the grounds for the proposed dismissal. A suitable period of time following the announcement shall be given for the church to privately raise concerns with the elders. After due consideration of such concerns, the elders may proceed with dismissal. When possible, they shall send a letter to the dismissed individual informing him of his dismissal. The elders shall subsequently communicate to the church that the person has been dismissed. If one who has been dismissed applies again for membership, the normal procedures shall be followed as set forth in Sections three (3) and four (4) of this Article. Dismissal may be warranted for any of the following reasons:

- I. A member in good standing concludes that he is not truly saved.
- II. A member in good standing wishes to terminate his membership for reasons that do not impugn his Christian profession.
- III. A member ceases to maintain vital contact with this church due to relocation or other unique circumstances.

E. By Excommunication: According to the teaching of Holy Scripture a congregation must cut off from its fellowship and visible membership any person who teaches or insists on holding false and heretical doctrine, who blatantly and persistently conducts himself in a manner inconsistent with his Christian profession, or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of the church and is unwilling to settle differences on Scriptural grounds (Matt. 18:15-18; I Cor. 5:1f; Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:6; Titus 3:10,11). The procedure to be followed in such excommunication is set forth in Article VII, Section 2 of this Constitution.

SECTION 6: Conduct Required of Members: Members are expected to walk worthily of the Lord, that His name and Word not be blasphemed but rather His excellencies be displayed through them, and that the church's good name not be damaged but rather enhanced. Therefore every member is expected to practice and cultivate godliness in all areas of life, including the following (Eph. 4:1; Col. 1:10; Phil. 1:27; 1 Thess. 2:12; Rom. 2:24; 1 Tim. 6:1; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Cor. 5:1-2; 1 Thess. 1:8-10; 2 Thess. 1:4):

A. Attendance at Stated Meetings: All regular members are expected to attend all the stated meetings of the church unless providentially hindered (by illness, accident, unusual working conditions, and other such extenuating circumstances). The stated meetings of the church are the Worship Gathering, Bible study, prayer meeting, other special

congregational meetings, and any special meetings which the elders shall occasionally deem it necessary to call. (Heb. 10:24 25; Acts 2:42; Matt. 18:20).

- B. Means of Grace: The church expects its members to make use of the various means of grace which are available to them such as the regular reading of the Bible, private prayer, family worship, and faithful participation in the Worship Gathering (Ps. 1:2; Col. 4:12; Deut. 6:4, 7), Bible study and prayer meetings.
- C. Giving and Financial Support: Since it is clearly taught in Scripture that Christians should financially support the work of the Lord by systematic and proportionate giving made through the local church (I Cor. 16:1,2; II Cor. 8:9), all the members are expected to conform to this rule of Scripture. The tithe (10 percent of one's income) is not imposed on the people of God as a tax, but is strongly urged upon each member as an expression of worship through initial giving, generously and cheerfully according to one's ability and the willingness of one's heart (II Cor. 8:1 5; Ex 36:2, 7).
- D. Family Life: The church expects its members to obey the teachings of the Scriptures in respect to family life and government. As the God appointed head of the family, the husband must rule over the household with gentleness and love but also with wisdom and firmness (Eph. 5:25ff; I Tim 3:4,5). The wife must be in subjection to her husband in all things according to the rule of Scripture (Eph. 5:22 24; I Pet. 3:1). The husband with the wife must "nurture their children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:1 4), by setting a godly example before them, by instructing them consistently in the Scriptures, and by loving, wise, and firm discipline.
- E. Relationships: Inasmuch as the church is represented in Scripture as a body having many members each endowed by the Spirit with gifts to be used for the good of the body, each of the members having its particular function and yet having a concern for the health and protection of the whole, each should make available to the church such talents and abilities as God has endowed them with (I Cor. 12:12 27; Eph. 4:4,11 16). This church expects that each of its members will strive for the good of the entire body. The members must actively seek to cultivate acquaintance with one another so that they may be better able to pray for one another, love, comfort, and encourage one another, and help one another materially as necessity may require. They must refrain from speaking ill of one another (Heb. 12:15; Eph. 4:29 32; II Thess. 3:6, 15).
- F. Evangelism: It is the duty and privilege of every Christian individually and as a member of a local church to labor for the extension of the kingdom of God both at home and to the ends of the earth. Therefore, every member of this church is expected prayerfully to recognize and to seize every opportunity to bear witness to his faith in Christ, both by consistent Christian conduct and by the testimony of his lips (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; I Pet. 3:15; Col. 4:5,6).
- G. Word: Each member of the church is required to render in his daily life loyal obedience to all the moral precepts established in the Word of God (Rom. 8:3,4). If God has not condemned or forbidden a practice in His Word, a Christian is at liberty to participate in it. The following principles must always guide the Christian's exercise of liberty:
 - 1. Love of God: As the servant of Christ, all actions must be moved by a motive of love to God, and all objects must be used for his glory. The term "liberty" is often used as a cloak of malicious self-indulgence, which is sin (I Cor. 10:31; I Tim. 4:4,5; I Pet. 2:15,16).
 - 2. Love of the brethren: Though no man may dictate the Christian's conscience, the welfare of fellow saints must always deeply affect his decisions. In a spirit of serving the brethren, he must do that which he judges will edify them and prevent their stumbling (Gal. 5:13; I Cor. 10:23; I Cor. 8:9).

3. Compassion for sinners: Use of liberty must always be regulated by its effect upon sinners, and the behavior chosen must be that which is least likely to offend and most likely to win some (I Cor. 9:19 22).

4. Watchfulness over the soul: Though free in conscience to use all of God's creation, carefulness in practice is demanded because of remaining lusts. Where the Christian judges himself weak through lust, he must abstain in order to persevere (I Cor. 9:23 27; Gal. 5:13; James 4:17; Rom. 13:14; 14:22,23).

H. Submission to Oversight: Members are expected to support and submit to the elders of the church. Supporting God's servants includes praying for them and their labors, cultivating personal acquaintance with them, loving them, esteeming them highly for their work's sake, standing by them in their afflictions and in all their good causes, assisting them, and defending rather than prejudicing or damaging their good name. Submitting to God's servants includes imitating their faith, graces, and godly practices as they also imitate Christ, receiving their teaching with readiness of mind and teachableness of spirit, humbly heeding their scriptural warnings as those appointed to watch for our souls, seeking and carefully considering their counsel as those counted faithful by the Lord, and abiding by their legitimate decisions without acting or speaking divisively even when differing with their judgment. All who come into the membership of this church are expected to recognize and submit to the scriptural authority deposited in the elders of this church. This responsibility will include willingly scheduling an oversight meeting with an elder(s) when requested (I Cor. 16:15,16; I Thess. 5:12,13; Heb. 13:7,17).

ARTICLE VII: CHURCH DISCIPLINE

SECTION 1: Formative Discipline: The normal instruction, encouragement, admonition, correction or reproof which occurs in the life of the church as the body ministers one to another (I Cor. 12:12 27), through mutual submission one to another (Eph. 5:21) and through submission to the ministry and rule of the overseers whom the Lord has set over His church (I Pet. 5:5) is formative discipline. God uses such discipline to conform us (thus "formative") into the image of the Son (Rom 8:29), resulting in the sanctification of each member individually and of the whole body of the church collectively (Eph. 4:11 16).

SECTION 2: Corrective Discipline:

A. General Statement: There are occasions, however, when one's failure to respond to this formative discipline makes the application of corrective discipline necessary, such as when heretical doctrine or disorderly or scandalous conduct appears among the members of the church. In all such cases reasonable efforts must be made to resolve difficulty, correct error, and remove offense through counsel and admonition before more drastic steps are taken (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19,20). The principles given to us in Matt. 18:15,16, I Cor. 5:1 13, Rom. 16:17 20, II Thess. 3:6 15, I Tim. 5:19, 20, Gal. 6:1, and II Tim. 2:24-26 must be carefully followed in all cases of corporate discipline. Corrective discipline always has for its aim the glory of God, the welfare and purity of the church, and the restoration and spiritual growth of the offender. When admonition is not heeded, suspension of some of the privileges of membership may need to be imposed, and if this measure fails, excommunication from the membership of the church may be necessary. All the members of the church are obliged to submit to and enforce as appropriate the decision of the church in acts of corrective discipline.

B. Suspension:

1. Any conduct on the part of a member which disturbs the peace of the church or damages its testimony may require that the offending brother or sister be debarred by action of the elders from participating in certain activities of the church according to the gravity of the offense. A suspension shall be announced to the congregation by the elders and shall remain in force until the suspended member gives evidence of true repentance and change of conduct. When a suspended member can be restored to full fellowship, this shall also be announced to the congregation by the elders. While a member is under such discipline, he shall be treated by the congregation according to the directions given in II Thess. 3:6, 15. Although such a person is considered to be walking disorderly, he must still be regarded as a member and not cut off from the church.
2. If a member has sinned publicly but shows hopeful signs of repentance, including submission to the admonition of the elders, it may still be necessary to suspend him for a time from some of the privileges of membership lest reproach be brought upon the church, lest others be emboldened to sin, and lest the offender himself fail to test his own soul and realize the gravity of his offense. Those who humbly submit to the imposed discipline shall afterwards be wholly forgiven and publicly received back into full fellowship of the church.
3. In the case where a person is accused or suspected of gross sin and absents himself from the congregation, refusing to meet with elders that the matter may be investigated, the elders shall announce to the congregation that the person is suspended from the membership, and such suspension shall continue in force as long as the conditions giving rise to it continue.

C. Excommunication. Excommunication is the strongest statement of church discipline and is the final act of corrective discipline. It shall be enacted Scripturally as an act of the church toward a member who teaches or insists on holding false or heretical doctrine, who blatantly or persistently conducts himself in a manner inconsistent with his Christian profession, or who persists in disturbing the unity and peace of the church (Titus 3:10,11; Rom. 16:17,18). Excommunication must be enacted in the following cases:

1. Suspended members who have persisted in unrepentant, sinful behavior may, by decision of the elders, have their status reviewed and be dealt with as in item #2 below.
2. Some types of conduct must be categorized as "immoral" (I Cor. 5:9 11; 6:9,10; Gal. 5:16ff) and a member guilty of such conduct must be cut off from the fellowship of the church (I Cor. 5:3 5; Matt. 18:17). In such a case the elders shall make earnest efforts to bring the offender to true repentance and reformation, but if these efforts fail, they shall report the same to the congregation at a regular or specially called business meeting of the church and recommend that the offender be excommunicated which must be done, according to Scripture by action of the entire church (Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:4). To be valid, an act of excommunication must have the approval of at least two thirds of the members present and voting.
3. Likewise, some wrong opinions regarding the doctrines of Scripture are so serious that they must be categorized as "heretical" (Gal. 1:6 9; I Tim. 4:1), and a member who persists in propagating or holding any such opinion, in spite of earnest and patient admonition, shall be dealt with in the same manner as an immoral person.

D. Restoration. It is the duty of the church to forgive and restore to membership those

persons who give satisfactory evidence of being penitent (II Cor. 2:6 8). The elders may review the status of those who have been excommunicated or suspended to judge whether the aims of the discipline have been accomplished. Such action is to be reported to the church. Upon recommendation of the elders, the congregation shall have the right to restore an excommunicated member by a two thirds vote of the members present and voting at a duly called congregational meeting. Such restoration does not automatically include restoration to offices previously held. Future service in an office will be determined according to Article IX of this Constitution.

ARTICLE VIII: ORDINANCES

SECTION 1: General Statement: There are two ordinances which our Lord has commanded us to observe, namely Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Neither of them has saving merit, nor is any grace imparted to the recipient through the water of Baptism or the bread and cup of the Supper. These ordinances are not means of "special grace," but they are "special means of grace" and powerful aids to the faith of the believers who participate in them.

SECTION 2: Baptism:

A. Administration: Only confessed disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ are proper candidates for baptism, and all such persons should be baptized (Acts 2:38). Believing that baptism is the God-ordained door of entrance into the visible community of the people of God, we shall receive into membership of the church only those who have been baptized "into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt 28:19).

B. Special Circumstances: Occasionally, a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ whose baptism is marked by irregularities of mode may apply for membership in this church. It is according to the mind of Christ that a believer who was baptized by a mode other than immersion should be immersed as a believer. Occasionally, such a believer may be prevented by his conscience from doing this. Therefore, should this be the case, the elders may at their discretion admit such a person if they believe that it is in the best interests of the person and this church. Before such a person is admitted, he must be submissive to instruction on the subject and prove to have a teachable and peaceable spirit with regard to the standards of this church respecting baptism. Should he come to agreement with the convictions of this church, he must, then, be immersed.

SECTION 3: The Lord's Supper: Whereas baptism is the initiatory ordinance by which one enters the visible church and should be observed only once by each believer, the Lord's Supper should be celebrated frequently by the assembled church (I Cor. 11:26). While this is a most holy ordinance and should be observed with solemnity and dignity, the bread and the cup of the Supper are, and remain, only symbols of the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to maintain the purity of this ordinance, the elders will faithfully seek to insure that only true believers who are members in good standing of true churches are admitted to the Table. True believers whose church membership involves unusual circumstances may be admitted at the discretion of the elders.

ARTICLE IX: OFFICE BEARERS

1: SECTION 1: General Statement: Jesus Christ alone is Head of the church (Col. 1:18), and he governs his church through office bearers whom he appoints and who are endowed by his Spirit with the gifts and graces needed to accomplish their work. Office bearers in the church are of two kinds: elders (also called "bishops/overseers, pastors"), and deacons (Phil. 1:1; I Tim. 3:3 13). Those whom Christ calls to rule in the church are called elders, pastors, or overseers

(interchangeable names designating the same office). It is the duty of the church to seek and discover among its members those to whom Christ the Lord has imparted the necessary gifts of office bearing, and after formally recognizing them by vote, to set them apart by united prayer. No one will be ordained as an office bearer (elder or deacon) without being committed to the spiritual gatherings of the church such as Worship Gathering, Bible study, and prayer meetings.

SECTION 2: Elders:

A. Number, Source, and Calling: Whereas in new or small congregations only one man may have the gifts requisite to his being recognized as an elder (such a congregation may, in fact, invite a man who has the necessary gifts to come and labor among them), the Scriptures indicate that normally there should be a plurality of elders in the church (Acts 20:17; Phil. 1:1). These are also called "bishops" (meaning "overseers") because they are charged with the oversight of the assembly (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2). They are the "pastors and teachers" given to the church "for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph 4:11,12). In view of the fact that the responsibilities of this office are numerous and grave, it is highly desirable that at least one elder should devote his full time to "labor in the word and doctrine" (I Tim. 5:17). The church is responsible to give adequate financial support to such men (I Cor. 9:9 11; I Tim. 5:17,18), and it is free to invite men from outside the local congregation to come into its midst and serve in this capacity. Any man called to the office of elder must join the church as a member and must conscientiously affirm his agreement with the Confession (Statement of Faith) and Constitution of Grace Baptist Church. Should he at any time move from this position, he is under spiritual and moral obligation to make this fact known to the church.

B. Roles and Responsibilities: Elders are responsible for the spiritual ministrations of the church, the implementation of discipline, and the oversight of the souls of the church's members "as they that shall give an account" to God (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; I Pet. 5:2,3). While every elder is to be "apt to teach," some will be more engaged in formal and public teaching, while others will be more engaged in pastoring (that is, private teaching and admonishing) and governing. Gifted men who are not recognized as elders may engage in public preaching and teaching, provided they are godly in character and walk, but the exercise of their gift must be under the direction and oversight of the elders. The authority of elders is a divinely ordained and delegated authority which nevertheless has important limitations also:

1. The Scriptures are the infallible and unchanging rule of the church's faith and practice, to which elders are bound in discharging their office. Insofar as the elders' instruction accords with the Scriptures, that instruction has the authority of Christ himself. When the Bible gives clear direction to the church on any issue, its teaching is always to be obeyed. Moreover, when elders require obedience to their directives and decisions, they must seek to gain the consciences of God's people through the ministry of the Word. In some cases, when no clear regulative word is given in Scripture, elders must exercise their authority subject to the general principles of Scripture and to the light of nature and Christian prudence.
2. The elders' authority is limited to the sphere of the church. They may not usurp the lawful authority of others (e.g., husbands, parents, civil rulers, employers), impose corrective actions beyond those of biblical church discipline, or command God's people in matters not specified in Scripture.
3. Elders are authorized and responsible to give comprehensive oversight to the church, including preaching and teaching the whole counsel of God, watching for the welfare

of the members' souls, and directing the church in all its tasks. Elders, however, must exercise their authority with sensitivity to God's people and as servants and examples to them. Therefore, in major endeavors the elders shall seek the congregation's support and carefully consider its input when doing so will not require them sinfully to relinquish their God-given responsibilities or authority.

4. Elders may not impose officers on the church nor may they unilaterally discipline any member. Nevertheless the elders have a lawful role in giving leadership to the church in making such decisions.
5. The authority of every elder is the same, so that every elder has equal rule in the church. Though elders will possess differing gifts and perform differing functions in the church, this diversity of gift and function does not negate real parity among them.

C. Oversight of Elders: While elders are overseers of the flock, they are themselves members of the flock. Therefore, each elder as an individual is under the oversight of his fellow elders and is subject to the same discipline as are all the members of the church.

D. Number and Term of Elders: The church should endeavor to discover and then formally recognize all the men whom the Holy Spirit has endowed with the requisite gifts and graces to oversee the church, but only such men. Thus when men have been ordained to this office, the church will have the confidence that it has recognized the overseers whom the Holy Spirit has set over it (Acts 20:28). It is evident, therefore, that neither the number of elders nor the length of their term of office can be fixed by the church.

E. Qualifications: The qualifications for a man chosen to fill the office of elder are clearly set forth in Scripture, particularly in I Tim. 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

SECTION 3: Deacons

A. Responsibilities: Deacons are responsible to administer the ordinary business, secular affairs, and benevolent concerns of the church so that the elders may devote themselves without distraction to the matters of spiritual oversight (Acts 6:3,4). The office of deacon is a serving rather than ruling office. They must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with and subjection to the elders.

B. Number of Deacons: The number of deacons shall not be fixed. The church shall choose as many as are needed for work to be done from among those who give evidence of having the Scriptural qualifications for that office (Acts 6:3).

C. Qualifications: The qualifications for a person chosen to fulfill the office of deacon are particularly set forth in Acts 6:3 and I Tim. 3:8-13.

SECTION 4: Appointment of Office Bearers:

A. Guidance on Appointments: The appointment of elders and deacons is the prerogative of the Lord Jesus Christ alone. However, he has ordained that each local church exercise the responsibility of recognizing those whom he is appointing to be elders and deacons in that particular church. Those involved should have an inward conviction that the Lord is leading them to the particular office, and the church should recognize that leading as it observes in the individual evidence of the gifts and graces which Scripture requires for particular office. This is a matter of such gravity that it should be accompanied by much prayerful waiting on God for guidance, a careful study of the relevant passages of Scripture, and an objective evaluation of each person nominated to a particular office. These activities are the responsibility of each individual member of the church as well as of the church as a whole.

B. Nominations: Nominations to the offices of elder and deacon may be made by the elders or by the congregation.

1. The elders may at any time during the year present a candidate or candidates to either or both offices and call a special congregational meeting for their consideration. In no case may someone be presented for either office without their knowledge and prior consent.
2. At least once each year, in conjunction with the Annual Congregational Meeting, the congregation will submit written ballots to determine the mind of God's people as to who they regard as qualifying for office. On this ballot each voting member may write the name of any member (male, if for elder) and the office for which he believes that member to be qualified. Those thus recognized by one fourth or more of the total voting members of the church shall be considered.
3. Prior to presenting the candidate(s) to the congregation, the elders will meet with them and their families to confirm their willingness to undergo congregational examination and their readiness to serve in church office. They may, without prejudice, decline nomination. If they consent, they will be presented to the congregation as a nominee for office.

C. Discussion of Qualifications and Voting: When the time comes to consider a nomination during a business meeting of the church, the candidate for office and any members of his immediate family who are present shall be requested to leave the room while qualifications are openly discussed by the entire congregation in the fear of God and the light of Scripture and with due respect for the reputation of the nominee/officer. After that, a written ballot shall be taken. It is hoped that the vote of the congregation will in such matters always be unanimous, but if unanimity is not realized, no less than a three fourths majority of the members present and voting shall be required for recognition of an office bearer. Any church meeting for the election of officers shall be announced on four (4) consecutive weeks prior to its being held.

D. Public Installation: Following the recognition of office bearers by vote of the congregation, they shall be publicly installed in the office at a regular Worship Gathering by the prayer of the church and laying on of hands by the elders (I Tim. 4:14; II Tim. 1:6).

E. Discipline and Reconfirmation of Office bearers: Office bearers are subject to the same rules of discipline as are the other members of the church. In addition, the Scriptures outline special guidelines for the discipline of elders in terms of the number of witnesses and the public nature of such discipline (I Tim. 5:19-22). They shall hold office as long as they are faithful to their calling and have the confidence of the congregation. The church shall reconfirm (or express the withdrawal of) its confidence in each of its office bearers at its annual meeting four years after their installation or last reconfirmation in the manner designated in Paragraph C of this section. There may arise reasons that would require an officer to be reviewed before the regularly scheduled time. Such a review meeting may be called by a majority of the elders (or a majority of the other elders in the case of an elder). The members may also request such a meeting. This request must be set forth in writing with the signatures of one third of the total voting membership of the church. It must be presented to the elders, who shall in a timely and constitutional way (see Paragraph C) call such a meeting. Any member who publicly suggests in such a meeting that the officer being reviewed is unqualified for the office must have previously spoken personally with the officer and informed the elders of the church of his concerns (I Tim 5:19). He must also present biblical and factual warrant for his concerns at the review meeting. Just as it is wrong for a church to retain an officer who is not biblically qualified, so also it is rebellion against the

Head of the church to reject an officer for any but biblical grounds. Additionally, any officers about whom such concerns are raised must be permitted, if they wish, to return to the meeting and defend themselves. The church should seek unity of mind concerning the matter, but should such unity not be fully realized, at least three fourths of those ballots cast shall be required for the reconfirmation of an officer in the office. Any officers failing reconfirmation no longer hold office in the church. In the event that officers fail to receive an expression of confidence from the congregation, they remain members in the church, unless disciplinary proceedings under Article VII are in effect. In these cases, these proceedings take precedence. In the event that a full time elder fails to receive an expression of confidence, he is removed from the office and no longer entitled to ongoing financial support from the church. Arrangements for his financial settlement shall be the responsibility of the elders. Officers may, however, resign their office without prejudice if for good and valid reasons they find they are no longer able to discharge the duties of it.

SECTION 5: TRUSTEES

A. Composition of the Board: In order to “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s” (Mark 12:17), this church shall have a Board of trustees. This Board shall consist of at least three people, with at least one elder, who are members in good standing and shall be elected by the church. The term for each trustee will be three years. Trustees may be elected to succeed themselves. Trustees may be elected from among the office bearers or from the congregation at large.

B. Duties of Trustees: The trustees shall perform such legal and business transactions as are particularly designated to them by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia. In the discharge of their duties, they shall act only at the direction of the elders.

ARTICLE X: CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

SECTION 1: General Statement: There shall be an Annual Congregational Meeting of the church for the hearing of reports and the transaction of such other business as may properly be brought before the congregation. Congregational meetings may be called at other times at the discretion of the elders or when one third of the voting members make a written request for such a meeting. This request must state the reason for the meeting, be signed by one third of the members in good standing, and must be presented to the elders, who shall in turn make the proper announcement of the meeting.

SECTION 2: Notice of Meetings:

- A. Congregational Meetings: Notice of all congregational meetings shall be given at regular Worship Gatherings on two (2) successive weeks immediately prior to the meetings. However, in the case of an emergency, a meeting may be called on shorter notice by notifying each member by mail or phone of the time, place, and purpose of the meeting. No meeting shall be called nor conducted unless every member has been notified.
- B. Special Meetings: Meetings for the hearing of special reports or for seeking the counsel of the congregation may be called on shorter notice, but no vote may be taken or other business transacted at such meetings. Each member must be notified prior to meeting.

SECTION 3: Quorum: The regular members present at any properly convened congregational meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The elders shall cancel any previously announced congregational meeting of the church if through an act of God (such as inclement weather) an unusually large proportion of the members of the church cannot be present.

SECTION 4. Maintenance of Order: An elder shall preside at all business meetings.

SECTION 5. Voting:

A. Eligibility: All regular members in good standing in the church may vote on any question brought before the congregation.

B. Decision Standards: Unanimity of heart and mind under God shall at all times be sought and prayed for (Acts 6:5), but when unanimity is not realized, not less than a two thirds majority of the members present and voting shall be required to make a resolution valid, unless other guidelines are required in this constitution.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

SECTION 1: Procedure: This Constitution may be amended by a three fourths majority of the regular members present and voting at a duly convened congregational meeting.

SECTION 2: Notification: No proposed amendment may be voted on which has not been distributed to the members in written form at least four (4) weeks prior to such a meeting.

ARTICLE XII: DISSOLUTION

If Grace Baptist Church should conclude its ministry and be dissolved, none of its assets remaining after meeting all responsibilities and payment of all just obligations shall inure to the benefit of an individual member of the church, its officers or other private individuals. Such assets, if any, shall in the event of its dissolution, be assigned by action of its members, at a properly called meeting, to such other organization(s) which are in harmony with the objectives and doctrinal position as stated in this Constitution. Such organization(s) must also be recognized by the United States Internal Revenue Service as entitled to income tax exempt status under section 501(c)(3) or amendments thereto of the revenue code.