

Constitution of Grace Community Church, Doctrinal Statement and Bylaws

PREAMBLE

Recognizing that God has called His people to meet, worship, and serve together in structured groups which Scripture refers to as churches, and that it is God's desire that all things in the church be done decently and in order (cf. I Cor. 14:40), we, the members of Grace Community Church, have set forth the following Constitution and Bylaws as a basis of that structure and order.

ARTICLE I

NAME

This organization shall be known as Grace Community Church of the area of Tulsa, Oklahoma (hereafter referred to as the "Church").

ARTICLE II

ARTICLES OF FAITH

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

We teach that the Bible is God's written revelation of God, and thus the sixty-six books of the Bible given to us by the Holy Spirit constitute the plenary (inspired equally in all parts) Word of God (I Cor. 2:7-14; 2 Pet. 1:20-21).

We teach that the Word of God is an objective, propositional revelation (I Thess. 2:13; I Cor. 2:13), verbally inspired in every word (2 Tim. 3:16), absolutely inerrant in the original documents, infallible, and God-breathed. We teach the literal, grammatical-historical, interpretation of Scripture which affirms the belief that the opening chapters of Genesis present creation in six literal days (Gen. 1:31; Exod. 31:17).

We teach that the Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Jn. 10:35; 16:12-13; 17:17; I Cor. 2:13; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; Heb 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

We teach that God spoke in His written Word by a process of dual authorship. The Holy Spirit so superintended the human authors that, through their individual personalities and different styles of writing, they composed and recorded God's Word to man (2 Pet. 1:20-21) without error in the whole or in the part (Matt. 5:18; 2 Tim. 3:16).

We teach that, whereas there may be several applications of any given passage of Scripture, there is but one true interpretation. The meaning of Scripture is to be found as one diligently applies the literal grammatical-historical method of interpretation under the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 7:17; 16:12-15; I Cor. 2:7-15; I Jn. 2:20). It is the responsibility of believers to ascertain carefully the true intent and meaning of Scripture, recognizing that proper application is binding on all generations. Yet the truth of Scripture stands in judgment of men; never do men stand in judgment of it.

GOD

We teach that there is but one living and true God (Deut. 6:4; Isa. 45:5-7; I Cor. 8:4), an infinite, all-knowing Spirit (Jn. 4:24), perfect in all His attributes, one in essence, eternally existing in three Persons--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)--each equally deserving worship and obedience.

God the Father

We teach that God the Father, the first person of the Trinity, orders and disposes all things according to His Own purpose and grace (Ps. 145:8-9; I Cor. 8:6). He is the creator of all things (Gen. 1:1-31; Eph. 3:9). As the only absolute and omnipotent ruler in the universe, He is sovereign in creation, providence, and redemption (Ps. 103:19; Rom. 11:36). His fatherhood involves both His designation within the Trinity and His relationship with mankind. As Creator He is Father to all men (Eph. 4:6), but He is spiritual Father only to believers (Rom. 8:14; 2 Cor. 6:18). He has decreed for His own glory all things that come to pass (Eph. 1:11). He continually upholds, directs, and governs all creatures and events (I Chron. 29:11). In His sovereignty He is neither author nor approver of sin (Hab. 1:13; Jn. 8:38-47), nor does He abridge the accountability of moral, intelligent creatures (I Pet. 1:17). He has graciously chosen from eternity past those whom He would have as His own (Eph. 1:4-6); He saves from sin all who come to Him through Jesus Christ; He adopts as His own all those who come to Him; and He becomes, upon adoption, Father to His own (Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Heb. 12:5-9).

God the Son

We teach that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, possesses all the divine excellencies, and in these He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father (Jn. 10:30; 14:9).

We teach that God the Father created according to His own will, through His Son, Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue in existence and in operation (Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:2).

We teach that in the incarnation (God becoming man) Christ surrendered only the prerogatives of deity but nothing of the divine essence, either in degree or kind. In His incarnation, the eternally existing second person of the Trinity accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity and so became the God-man (Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 2:9).

We teach that Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness (Mic.5:2; Jn. 5:23; 14:9-10; Col. 2:9).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:23, 25; Lk. 1:26-35); that He was God incarnate (Jn. 1:1,14); and that the purpose of the incarnation was to reveal God, redeem men, and rule over God's kingdom (Ps. 2:7-9; Isa. 9:6; Jn. 1:29; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 7:25-26; I Pet. 1:18-19).

We teach that, in the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity laid aside His right to the full prerogatives of coexistence with God, assumed the place of a Son, and took on an existence appropriate to a servant while never divesting Himself of His divine attributes (Phil. 2:5-8).

We teach that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood and sacrificial death on the cross and that His death was voluntary, vicarious, substitutionary, propitiatory, and redemptive (Jn. 10:15; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:8; I Pet. 2:24).

We teach that our justification is made sure by His literal, physical resurrection from the dead and that He is now ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our Advocate and High Priest (Matt. 28:6; Lk. 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Rom. 4:25; 8:34; Heb. 7:25; 9:24; I Jn. 2:1).

We teach that in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, God confirmed the deity of His Son and gave proof that God has accepted the atoning work of Christ on the cross. Jesus' bodily resurrection is also the guarantee of a future resurrection for all believers (Jn. 5:26-29; 14:19; Rom. 1:4; 4:25; 6:5-10; I Cor. 15:20,23).

We teach that Jesus Christ will return to receive the church, which is His body, unto Himself at the rapture, and, returning with His church in glory, will establish His Millennial kingdom on earth (Acts 1:9-11; I Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20).

We teach that the Lord Jesus Christ is the one through whom God will judge all mankind (Jn. 5:22-23): a. Believers (I Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). b. Living inhabitants of the earth at His glorious return (Matt. 25:31-46). c. Unbelieving dead at the Great White Throne (Rev. 20:11-15)

As the mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5), the head of His body the church (Eph. 1:22; 5:23; Col. 1:18), and the coming universal King who will reign on the throne of David (Isa. 9:6; Lk. 1:31-33), He is the final judge of all who fail to place their trust in Him as Lord and Savior (Matt. 25:14-46; Acts 17:30-31).

God the Holy Spirit

We teach that the Holy Spirit is a divine person, eternal, underived, possessing all the attributes of personality and deity including intellect (I Cor. 2:10-13), emotions (Eph.

4:30), will (I Cor. 12:11), eternity (Heb. 9:14), omnipresence (Ps. 139:7-10), omniscience (Isa. 40:13-14), omnipotence (Rom. 15:13), and truthfulness (Jn. 16:13). In all the divine attributes He is coequal and consubstantial with the Father and the Son (Matt. 28:19; Acts 5:3-4; 28:25-26; I Cor. 12:4-6; 2 Cor. 13:14; and Jer. 31:31-34 with Heb. 10:15-17).

We teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to execute the divine will with relation to all mankind. We recognize His sovereign activity in creation (Gen. 1:2), the incarnation (Matt. 1:18), the written revelation (2 Pet. 1:20-21), and the work of salvation (Jn. 3:5-7).

We teach that the work of the Holy Spirit in this age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ (Jn. 14:16-17; 15:26) to initiate and complete the building of the body of Christ, which is His church (I Cor. 1:12-13). The broad scope of His divine activity includes convicting the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and transforming believers into the image of Christ (Jn. 16:7-9; Acts 1:5; 2:4; Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Eph. 2:22).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit also indwells, sanctifies, instructs, empowers them for service, and seals them unto the day of redemption (Rom. 8:9; 2 Cor. 3:6; Eph. 1:13).

We teach that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible. Every believer possesses the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation, and it is the duty of all those born of the Spirit to be filled with the Spirit (Jn. 16:13; Rom. 8:9; Eph. 5:18; 2 Pet. 1:19-21; I Jn. 2:20, 27).

We teach that the Holy Spirit administers spiritual gifts to the church. The Holy Spirit glorifies neither Himself nor His gifts by ostentatious displays, but He does glorify Christ by implementing His work of redeeming the lost and building up believers in the most holy faith (Jn. 16:13-14; Acts 1:8; I Cor. 12:4-11; 2 Cor. 3:18).

We teach, in this respect, that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in the bestowing of all His gifts for the perfecting of the saints today and that speaking in tongues, prophetic revelations and the working of sign miracles in the beginning days of the church were for the purpose of pointing to and authenticating the apostles as revealers of divine truth, and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers (I Cor. 12:4-11; 13:8-10; 2 Cor. 12:12; Eph. 4:7-12; Heb. 2:1-4).

MAN

We teach that man was directly and immediately created by God in His image and likeness. Man was created free of sin with a rational nature, intelligence, volition, self-determination, and moral responsibility to God (Gen. 2:7, 15-25; Js. 3:9).

We teach that God's intention in the creation of man was that man should glorify God, enjoy God's fellowship, live his life in the will of God, and by this accomplish God's purpose for man in the world (Isa. 43:7; Col. 1:16; Rev. 4:11).

We teach that in Adam's sin of disobedience to the revealed will and Word of God, man lost his innocence; incurred the penalty of spiritual and physical death; became subject to the wrath of God; and became inherently corrupt and utterly incapable of choosing or doing that which is acceptable to God apart from divine grace. With no recuperative powers to enable him to recover himself, man is hopelessly lost. Man's salvation is thereby wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19; Jn. 3:36; Rom. 3:23; 6:23; I Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1-3; I Tim. 2:13-14; I Jn. 1:8).

We teach that because all men were in Adam, a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. All men are thus sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration (Ps. 14:1-3; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12).

SALVATION

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works (Jn. 1:12; Eph. 1:7; 2:8-10; I Pet. 1:18-19)

Election

We teach that election is the act of God by which, before the foundation of the world, He chose in Christ those whom He graciously regenerates, saves, and sanctifies (Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:4-11; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 2:10; I Pet. 1:1-2).

We teach that sovereign election does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezek. 18:23, 32, 33:11; Jn. 3:18-19, 36; 5:40; Rom. 9:22-23; 2 Thess. 2:10-12; Rev. 22:17). Nevertheless, since sovereign grace includes the means of receiving the gift of salvation as well as the gift itself, sovereign election will result in what God determines. All whom the Father calls to Himself will come in faith and all who come in faith the Father will receive (Jn. 6:37-40,44; Acts 13:48; Jn. 4:8).

We teach that election should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign but He exercises His sovereignty in harmony with His other attributes, especially His omniscience, justice, holiness, wisdom, grace, and love (Rom. 9:11-16). This sovereignty will always exalt the will of God in a manner totally consistent with His character as revealed in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. 11:25-28; 2 Tim. 1:9).

Regeneration

We teach that regeneration is a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which the divine nature and divine life are given (Jn. 3:3-7; Tit. 3:5). It is instantaneous and is accomplished solely by the power of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the Word of God (Jn. 5:24). Following regeneration, the repentant sinner, as enabled by the Holy Spirit, responds in faith to the divine provision of salvation. Genuine regeneration is manifested by fruits worthy of repentance as demonstrated in righteous attitudes and conduct. Good works will be its proper evidence and fruit (I Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:10), and will be experienced to the extent that the believer submits to the control of the Holy Spirit in his life through faithful obedience to the Word of God (Eph. 5:17-21; Phil. 2:12; Col. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:4-10). This obedience causes the believer to be increasingly conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). Such conformity is climaxed in the believer's glorification at Christ's coming (Rom. 8:17; 2 Pet. 1:4; I Jn. 3:2-3).

Justification

We teach that justification before God is an act of God (Rom. 8:33) by which He declares righteous those who, through faith in Christ alone, repent of their sins (Isa. 55:6-7; Lk. 13:3; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 11:18; Rom. 2:4; 2 Cor. 7:10) and confess Him as sovereign Lord (Rom. 10:9-10; I Cor. 12:3; 2 Cor. 4:5; Phil. 2:11). This righteousness is apart from any virtue or work of man (Rom. 3:20; 4:6) and involves the imputation of our sins to Christ (Col. 2:14; I Pet. 2:24) and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us (I Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). By this means God is enabled to "be just, and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26).

Sanctification

We teach that every believer is sanctified (set apart) unto God by justification and is therefore declared to be holy and is therefore identified as a saint. This sanctification is positional and instantaneous and should not be confused with progressive sanctification. This sanctification has to do with the believer's standing, not his present walk or condition (Acts 20:32; I Cor. 1:2, 30; 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 2:11; 3:1; 10:10, 14; 13:12; I Pet. 1:2).

We teach that there is also by the work of the Holy Spirit a progressive sanctification by which the state of the believer is brought closer to the standing the believer positionally enjoys through justification. Through obedience to the Word of God and the empowering of the Holy Spirit, the believer is able to live a life of increasing holiness in conformity to the will of God, becoming more and more like our Lord Jesus Christ (Jn. 17:17,19; Rom. 6:1-22; 2 Cor. 3:18; I Thess. 4:3-4; 5:23).

In this respect, we teach that every saved person is involved in a daily conflict--the new creation in Christ doing battle against the flesh--but adequate provision is made for victory through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The struggle nevertheless stays with the believer all through this earthly life and is never completely ended. All claims to the eradication of sin in this life are unscriptural. Eradication of sin is not possible, but

the Holy Spirit does provide for victory over sin (Gal. 5:16-25; Eph. 4:22-24; Phil. 3:12; Col. 3:9-10; I Pet. 1:14-16; I Jn. 3:5-9).

Security

We teach that all the redeemed once saved are kept by God's power and are thus secure in Christ forever (Jn. 5:24; 6:37-50; 10:27-30; Rom. 5:9-10; 8:1, 31-39 I Cor. 1:4-8; Eph. 4:30; Heb. 7:25; 13:5; I Pet. 1:5; Jude 24).

We teach that it is the privilege of believers to rejoice in the assurance of their salvation through the testimony of God's Word, which, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion for sinful living and carnality (Rom. 6:15-22; 13:13-14; Gal. 5:13, 25-26; Tit. 2:11-14).

Separation

We teach that separation from sin is clearly called for throughout the Old and New Testaments, and that the Scriptures clearly indicate that in the last days apostasy and worldliness shall increase (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Tim. 3:1-5).

We teach that out of deep gratitude for the undeserved grace of God granted to us and because our glorious God is so worthy of our total consecration, all the saved should live in such a manner as to demonstrate our adoring love to God and so as not to bring reproach upon our Lord and Savior. We also teach that separation from all religious apostasy and worldly and sinful practices is commanded of us by God (Rom. 12:1-2; I Cor. 5:9-13; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; I Jn. 2:15-17; 2 Jn. 9-11).

We teach that believers should be separated unto our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thess. 1:11-12; Heb. 12:1-2) and affirm that the Christian life is a life of obedient righteousness demonstrated by a beatitude attitude (Matt. 5:2-12) and a continual pursuit of holiness (Rom. 12:1-2; 2 Cor. 7:1; Heb. 12:14; Tit. 2:11-14; I Jn. 3:1-10).

THE CHURCH

We teach that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ are immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual body, the church (I Cor. 12:12-13), the bride of Christ (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:23-32; Rev. 19:7-8), of which Christ is the head (Eph. 1:22, 4:15; Col. 1:18).

We teach that the formation of the church, the body of Christ, began on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21, 38-47) and will be completed at the coming of Christ for His own at the rapture (I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:13-18).

We teach that the church is thus a unique spiritual organism designed by Christ, made up of all born-again believers in this present age (Eph. 2:11-3:6). The church is distinct from Israel (I Cor. 10:32), a mystery not revealed until this age (Eph. 3:1-6; 5:32).

We teach that the establishment and continuity of local churches is clearly taught and defined in the New Testament Scriptures (Acts 14:23, 27; 20:17,28; Gal. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; I Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1) and that the members of the one spiritual body are directed to associate themselves together in local assemblies (I Cor. 11:18-20; Heb. 10:25).

We teach that the one, supreme authority for the church is Christ (I Cor. 11:3; Eph. 1:22; Col. 1:18) and that church leadership, gifts, order, discipline, and worship are all appointed through His sovereignty as found in the Scriptures. The biblically designated officers serving under Christ and over the assembly are elders (also called bishops, pastors, and pastor-teachers; Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11) and deacons, both of whom must meet biblical qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-13; Tit. 1:5-9; I Pet. 5:1-5).

We teach the importance of discipleship (Matt. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 2:2), mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matt. 18:5-14), as well as the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matt. 18:25-22; Acts 5:1-11; I Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; Tit. 1:10-16).

We teach the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government and freedom from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations (Tit. 1:5). We teach that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other for the presentation and propagation of the faith. Each local church, however, through its elders and their interpretation and application of Scripture, should be the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. The elders should determine all other matters of membership, policy, discipline, benevolence, and government as well (Acts 15:19-31; 20:28; I Cor. 5:4-7,13; I Pet. 5:1-4).

We teach that the purpose of the church is to glorify God (Eph. 3:21) by building itself up in the faith (Eph. 4:13-16), by instruction of the Word (2 Tim. 2:2,15; 3:16-17), by fellowship (Acts 2:47; I Jn. 1:3), by keeping the ordinances (Lk. 22:19; Acts 2:38-42), and by advancing and communicating the gospel to the entire world (Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8; 2:42).

We teach the calling of all saints to the work of service (1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 4:12).

We teach the need of the church to cooperate with God as He accomplishes His purpose in the world. To that end, He gives the church spiritual gifts. First, He gives men chosen for the purpose of equipping the saints for the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:7-12) and He also gives unique and special spiritual abilities to each member of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5-8; I Cor. 12:4-31; I Pet. 4:10-11).

We teach that there were two kinds of gifts given the early church: miraculous gifts of divine revelation and healing, given temporarily in the apostolic era for the purpose of confirming the authenticity of the Apostles' message (Heb. 2:3, 4; 2 Cor. 12:12); and ministering gifts, given to equip believers for edifying one another. With the New Testament revelation now complete, Scripture becomes the sole test of the authenticity of

a man's message, and confirming the fits of a miraculous nature are no longer necessary to validate a man or his message (I Cor. 13:8-12). Miraculous gifts can even be counterfeited by Satan so as to deceive even believers (I Cor. 13:13-14:12; Rev. 13:13-14). The only gifts in operation today are those non-revelatory equipping gifts given for edification (Rom. 12:6-8).

We teach that no one possesses the gift of healing today but that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, and will answer in accordance with His own perfect will for the sick, suffering, and afflicted (Lk. 18:1-6; Jn. 5:7-9; 2 Cor. 12:6-10; Js. 5:13-16; 1 Jn. 5:14-15).

We teach that two ordinances have been committed to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38-42). Christian baptism by immersion (Acts 8:36-39) is the solemn and beautiful testimony of a believer showing forth his faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and his union with Him in death to sin and resurrection to a new life (Rom. 6:1-11). It is also a sign of fellowship and identification with the visible body of Christ (Acts 2:41-42).

We teach that the Lord's Supper is the commemoration and proclamation of His death until He comes, and should be always preceded by solemn self-examination (1 Cor. 11:28-32). We also teach that whereas the elements of communion are only representative of the flesh and blood of Christ, the Lord's Supper is nevertheless an actual communion with the risen Christ who is present in a unique way, fellowshiping with His people (1 Cor. 10:16).

ANGELS

Holy Angels

We teach that angels are created beings and are therefore not to be worshipped. Although they are a higher order of creation than man, they are created to serve God and to worship Him (Lk. 2:9-14; Heb. 1:6-7, 14; 2:6-7; Rev. 5:11-14; 19:10; 22:9).

Fallen Angels

We teach that Satan is a created angel and the author of sin. He incurred the judgment of God by rebelling against his Creator (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19), by taking numerous angels with him in his fall (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 12:1-14), and by introducing sin into the human race by his temptation of Eve (Gen. 3:1-15).

We teach that Satan is the open and declared enemy of God and man (Isa. 14:13-14; Matt. 4:1-11; Rev. 12:9-10), the prince of this world who has been defeated through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 16:20), and that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire (Isa. 14:12-17; Ezek. 28:11-19; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).

LAST THINGS (Eschatology)

Death

We teach that physical death involves no loss of our immaterial consciousness (Rev. 6:9-11), that the soul of the redeemed passes immediately into the presence of Christ (Lk. 23:43; Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8), that there is a separation of soul and body (Phil. 1:21-24), and that, for the redeemed, such separation will continue until the rapture (1 Thess. 4:13-17), which initiates the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-6), when soul and body will be reunited to be glorified forever with our Lord (Phil. 3:21; I Cor. 15:35-44, 50-54). Until that time, the souls of the redeemed in Christ remain in joyful fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:8).

We teach the bodily resurrection of all men, the saved to eternal life (Jn. 6:39; Rom. 8:10-11, 19-23; 2 Cor. 4:14), and the unsaved to judgment and everlasting punishment (Dan. 12:2; Jn. 5:29; Rev. 20:13-15).

We teach that the souls of the unsaved at death are kept under punishment until the second resurrection (Lk. 16:19-26; Rev. 20:13-15), when the soul and the resurrection body will be united (Jn. 5:28-29). They shall then appear at the Great White Throne Judgment (Rev. 20:11-15) and shall be cast into hell, the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41-46), cut off from the life of God forever (Dan. 12:2; Matt. 25:41-46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9).

The Rapture of the Church

We teach a bodily return of the Lord Jesus Christ but realize the sequence of events are open to debate, being only by inference. Hence, the Rapture of the Church could be before the tribulation, after the tribulation or somewhere in between. Grace Community Church does not affirm a particular dogmatic view on the sequential time of the Rapture, as we do not believe the Scriptures clear on that issue.

The Tribulation Period

We teach the Bible teaches a coming time of Great Tribulation, when the righteous judgments of God will be poured out upon an unbelieving world (Jer. 30:7; Dan. 9:27; 12:1; 2 Thess. 2:7-12; Rev. 16), and that these judgments will be climaxed by the return of Christ in glory to the earth (Matt. 24:27-31; 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 2:7-12). At that time the Old Testament and tribulation saints will be raised and the living will be judged (Dan. 12:2-3; Rev. 20:4-6). This period includes the seventieth week of Daniel's prophecy (Dan. 9:24-27; Matt. 24:15-31; 25:31-46).

The Second Coming and the Millennial Reign

We teach that Christ will come to earth to occupy the throne of David (Matt. 25:31; Lk. 1:31-33; Acts 1:10-11; 2:29-30) and establish His Messianic kingdom for a thousand

years on the earth (Rev. 20:1-7). During this time the resurrected saints will reign with Him over Israel and all the nations of the earth (Ezek. 37:21-28; Dan. 7:17-22; Rev. 19:11-16). This reign will be preceded by the overthrow of the Antichrist and the False Prophet, and by the removal of Satan from the world (Dan. 7:17-27; Rev. 20:1-7).

We teach that the kingdom itself will be the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel (Isa. 65:17-25; Ezek. 37:21-28; Zech. 8:1-17) to restore them to the land which they forfeited through their disobedience (Deut. 28:15-68). The result of their disobedience was that Israel was temporarily set aside (Matt. 21:43; Rom. 11:1-26) but will again be awakened through repentance to enter into the land of blessing (Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 36:22-32; Rom. 11:25-29).

We teach that this time of our Lord's reign will be characterized by harmony, justice, peace, righteousness, and long life (Isa. 11; 65:17-25; Ezek. 36:33-38), and will be brought to an end with the release of Satan (Rev. 20:7).

The Judgment of the Lost

We teach that following the release of Satan after the thousand-year reign of Christ (Rev. 20:7), Satan will deceive the nations of the earth and gather to battle against the saints and the beloved city, at which time Satan and his army will be devoured by fire from heaven (Rev. 29:9). Following this, Satan will be through into the lake of fire and brimstone (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10) whereupon Christ, who is the judge of all men (Jn. 5:22), will resurrect and judge the great and small at the Great White Throne Judgment.

We teach that the resurrection of the unsaved dead to judgment will be a physical resurrection, whereupon receiving their judgment (Rom. 14:10-13), they will be committed to an eternal conscious punishment in the lake of fire (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:11-15).

Eternity

We teach that after the closing of the millennium, the temporary release of Satan, and the judgment of unbelievers (2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 20:7-15), the saved will enter the eternal state of glory with God, after which the elements of this earth are to be dissolved (2 Pet. 3:10) and replaced with a new earth wherein only righteousness dwells (Eph. 5:5; Rev. 20:15, 21-22). Following this, the heavenly city will come down out of heaven (Rev. 21:2) and will be the dwelling place of the saints, where they will enjoy forever fellowship with God and one another (Jn. 17:3; Rev. 21,22). Our Lord Jesus Christ, having fulfilled His redemptive mission will then deliver up the kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28) that in all spheres the triune God may reign forever and ever (1 Corinthians 15:28).

ARTICLE III

COVENANT OF THE CHURCH

The covenant of the Church is as follows: We, the Members of Grace Community Church, do affectionately welcome you into the fellowship with us in the blessings of the Gospel, and covenant together, God helping us, that we will strive to grow in personal and collective holiness; we dedicate ourselves to the collective and personal accountability of discipleship; we will submit to the loving oversight and discipline of the members and officers of Grace Community Church; we will give cheerfully to this church as God has prospered us; we will dedicate our families to live for the Lord; and we will purpose to advance the kingdom of God through the investment of our time, talents, energy and reputation.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Section A. Definition.

Membership at Grace Community Church consists of the willful agreement with and submission to the doctrinal statement and administration of the by-laws of the church as determined by the Elders by those who meet the qualifications of membership set forth below. We recognize, however, that there may be individuals or families who worship at and participate in ministry through Grace Community Church on a continual and regular basis, who may qualify for membership, but for whatever reason, do not apply for membership. Such individuals or families, while they do not have full voting rights of membership, will nevertheless be held accountable to the covenant of the church.

Section B. Application.

Any person may make application for Membership in the Church by submitting written application for Membership on a form supplied by the Church. Such application shall be delivered to one of the Pastors or the Board of Elders.

Section C. Qualification.

Qualification for Membership takes place by the following: 1. Complete a New Member's Information Class, unless waived by the Elder Board. 2. Share their personal testimony regarding their coming to a saving knowledge of Christ with at least two Members of the Board of Elders. 3. Obtain the approval for Membership from the Elder leading the New Member's Class and the Elders hearing the personal testimony. 4. Assent, in writing, to the Articles of Faith and Covenant of the Church and agree to be governed by the Constitution and Bylaws of the Church, as administered by the Elders. 5. Be at least fifteen (15) years of age, provided that no Member shall have the right to vote as a

Member until he attains the age of eighteen (18). 6. Submission to the ordinance of baptism in accordance with the New Testament pattern.

If, upon review of an application for membership, the Elder Board determines that the applicant meets the qualifications for membership, they will be presented to the Church during a worship service on a Sunday morning or evening.

If, upon review of an application for membership, the Elder Board determines that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied. The decision made by the Elder Board shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

Section D. Termination of Membership.

Membership in the Church is viewed as a privilege and shall be terminated upon the occurrence of any of the following: 1. Excommunication as exercised by the Board of Elders. 2. Request of the Member, which termination shall be effective upon receipt of the request of the Member by any Pastor or any Member of the Board of Elders. 3. Failure to regularly attend Church services for a period of six (6) months, which termination shall be effective upon the determination of the same by the Board of Elders. In such determination, the Board of Elders may consider, and make exceptions for, absences due to extraordinary causes.

Section E. Discipline of Membership.

The accountability of church discipline will follow the outline of Matthew 18:15-20, without partiality. Once the Elder Board has been informed of a member's unrepentant sin and having investigated these charges, finds them to be true, they will privately appeal to the church member through several appointed Elders. If the member does not turn from the sin(s) in question after a period of time set by the Elders, then the Elder Board will send the offending member a letter stating that at a regularly called meeting of the church, the Pastor or Chairman of the Board of Elders will announce the person and transgression to the Church. Then after continued refusal to repent, again with sufficient time given, the Pastor or Chairman of the Board of Elders will excommunicate the offender by public announcement. Excommunication prohibits fellowship with or attendance at the Church, until the Elder Board is satisfied the person has demonstrated a lifestyle of genuine repentance.

ARTICLE V

BOARD OF ELDERS

Section A. Composition of the Board.

The government of the Church shall be vested in the Board of Elders which shall be composed of the Senior Pastor who shall be a member of the Board by virtue of his office and one or more other members. The total number of members of the Board of Elders shall be determined by the board of Elders as needed.

Section B. Qualification.

The Elders of the Church shall be Members who meet the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be: Blameless as a steward of God, i.e., above reproach; without dishonor or stained reputation. Husband of one wife, i.e., a one-woman man; demonstrating unquestioned loyalty to his wife. Temperate, i.e., sober in mind and vigilant; demonstrating good control of his mind and body. Sober-minded, i.e., prudent; discerning and aware of spiritual dangers. Of good behavior, i.e., orderly in conduct; respectable. Given to hospitality, i.e., demonstrates help and outreach to people in need. Apt to teach, i.e., able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching, with skill and spiritual giftedness. Not given to wine, i.e., not addicted to alcohol or drugs; Not violent, i.e., not pugnacious or expressive of anger in physical threats. Patient, i.e., moderate, forbearing, gentle in attitude and practice. Not a brawler, i.e., uncontentious; not soon angry or quick-tempered. Not covetous, i.e., not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain or materialistic. Rules well his own house, i.e., his children are faithful, controlled and not accused of rebellion to God; he enjoys a close intimate relationship with his wife, who models joyful submission to her husband and supports his ministry wholeheartedly Not a novice, i.e., not a new convert but demonstrating genuine spiritual maturity. Has a good report, i.e., a good reputation with unbelievers in the community. Not self-willed, i.e., not insisting on his own way or opinions. A lover of good men and things, i.e., enjoys goodness, righteousness and hates evil. Just, i.e., fair in his dealings with others, with a sense of justice; without partiality. Holy, i.e., devout and separated from the world; demonstrates righteous living. Self-controlled, i.e., keeping his passions and temper under control.

Section C. Selection.

Recommendations to fill the office of Elder may /shall be requested once a year from all church members. The Board of Elders shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of not less than three to five (3-5) active church members. shall be appointed by the Board of Elders shall also who will also designate a chairman of the Nominating Committee. This committee shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. Members of the Nominating Committee may be nominees, but no committee member shall nominate himself. A proposed slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Committee shall then be submitted to Board of Elders for their review and comment. Upon receiving these comments, the Nominating Committee shall submit a final the slate of nominees (which may be revised) to the Board of Elders, along with any relevant comments. The Board of Elders shall then approve, disapprove, or add to this list of nominees. The Secretary of the Board of Elders will publish in the church bulletin post the names of nominees in alphabetical order three weeks prior to a scheduled meeting of the Board of Elders, where they will give final approval approve or disapproval

disapprove of each nominee. A unanimous vote among the Board of Elders is required for approval of a nominee to Eldership.

Section D. Term of Office.

The term of an Elder's office shall be ongoing, provided that, if in the event an Elder ceases being a member of Grace Community Church, his term shall automatically expire. An annual congregational confidence vote may be called by the Elder Board or Senior Pastor. The Elder Board will be accountable to review each Elders life in view of the qualifications of 1Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, once each year.

Section E. Officers of the Board.

The officers of the Board of Elders will consist of: A Board Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary, along with such other officers as the Board may choose. These officers shall be selected by the Board of Elders each year. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman must be members of the Board of Elder. Every Member of the Board of Elders shall be eligible to serve in such offices. However, the Secretary may be selected from the eligible Deacons of the Church. . The Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary shall serve as be Trustees of the Church to fulfill the legal requirements of nonprofit Oklahoma corporations and shall hold such corporate offices to fulfill all other required for corporate legal purposes.

Section F. Duties.

It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to govern all of the ministries and business of the Church which shall include, but not be limited to, the carrying out of the shepherding, teaching, disciplining, and overseeing of the Members of the Church. The Elders have the right to delegate business of the church to wise godly men and women.

ARTICLE VI

DEACONS

Section A. Composition.

The Deacon Ministry of the Church shall be conducted by a number of men as determined by the Board of Elders. The Deacons shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the saints, assist the Pastor at communion and baptismal services, aid in general care of the church, and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.

The Deaconess Ministry of the Church shall be conducted by a number of women as determined by the Board of Elders. The Deaconesses shall prepare the communion

elements, assist the Pastor at baptismal services and in the general spiritual care of the church, and shall assist in the care of the sick and needy.

Section B. Qualification.

The Deacons of the Church shall be men who are Members of the Church and meet the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A Deacon shall be a man of dignity, not double-tongued, does not use wine, alcohol or recreational drugs, not fond of sordid gain, holding the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found beyond reproach. Basically, Deacons at Grace Community Church will be men with the same qualifications as Elders, with two exceptions: 1.) he can be a young man and 2.) he may not have the spiritual gift of teaching.

The Deaconesses of the Church shall be women who are Members of the Church and meet the qualifications specified in 1 Timothy 3:11 and generic qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-12, with a special demonstration of dignity, carefulness in the use of speech, temperance and faithfulness in all things.

Section C. Selection.

Recommendations to fill the office of Deacon and Deaconess may be requested once a year from all church members. The Board of Elders shall appoint a Nominating Committee consisting of not less than three (3) active church members. The Board of Elders shall also designate a chairman of the Nominating Committee. This may be the same Nominating Committee that will also make recommendations for Elders. This committee shall review all nominations and determine each nominee's qualifications. Members of the Nominating Committee may be nominees, but no committee member shall nominate himself. A proposed slate of nominees prepared by the Nominating Committee shall then be submitted to Board of Elders for their review and comment. Upon receiving these comments, the Nominating Committee shall submit a final slate of nominees (which may be revised) to the Board of Elders, along with any relevant comments. The Board of Elders shall then approve, disapprove, or add to this list of nominees. The Secretary of the Board of Elders will publish in the church bulletin the names of nominees in alphabetical order three weeks prior to a scheduled meeting of the Board of Elders, where they will give final approval or disapproval of each nominee. A unanimous vote among the Board of Elders is required for approval of a nominee to the position of Deacon or Deaconess.

The selection of Deacons and Deaconesses shall be made by the Board of Elders, following the same selection procedure for the Elder nominees.

Section D. Term of Office.

The term of a Deacon's office shall be ongoing, provided that, in the event a Deacon ceases being a Member of Grace Community Church, his term shall automatically

terminate. The Board of Elders will review each Deacon and Deaconesses life in view of their demonstrated qualifications, during the month of March of each year.

Section E. Duties.

The Deacons shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the saints, assist the Pastor at communion and baptismal services, aid in general care of the church, and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.

The Deaconesses shall prepare the communion elements, assist the Pastor at baptismal services and in the general spiritual care of the church, such as the care of the sick and needy, and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders. Deaconesses will not serve in any authoritative capacity over men.

ARTICLE VII

PASTORS

Section A. Number.

The full-time pastoral ministry of the Church shall be the responsibility of a Senior Pastor and such number of Associate Pastors as may be determined by the Board of Elders.

Section B. Qualifications.

The Senior Pastor shall meet the qualifications of an Elder as specified in Article V, Section B hereof and who, without mental reservation, agrees to the Constitution and Bylaws of Grace Community Church. An Associate Pastor shall also meet the qualifications of an Elder as specified in Article V, Section B hereof and who, without mental reservation, agree to the Constitution and Bylaws of Grace Community Church.

Section C. Selection.

The selection of a Senior Pastor shall be subject to the approval of selected by the Board of Elders and subject to the confirmation approval of two-thirds of the Members voting at a regularly called meeting of the Church. Associate Pastors shall be selected by the Senior Pastor, subject to the approval of the Board of Elders and the confirmation approval of two-thirds of the Members voting at a regularly called meeting of the Church. Notice of such a meeting shall be given in the Church bulletin on two Sundays preceding the date of such meeting. The Board of Elders may form a Pastoral Search Committee to evaluate possible candidates for either Senior Pastor or Associate Pastor. The Search Committee will be made up of no less than three (3) active church members.

Section D. Term.

A Senior Pastor's or any Associate Pastor's term shall be indefinite. The Elders reserve the right to dismiss the Senior Pastor or an Associate Pastor upon giving him one month's written notice of its intention to dismiss. During that month the Board of Elders, excluding the Senior Pastor or Associate, have the right to determine if all preaching and teaching responsibilities are to cease for that month. The Pastor must give one month's notice if he intends to resign. The time limit of a Pastor or Associate Pastor's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Pastor/Associate and the Board of Elders by mutual agreement provide otherwise.

Section E. Duties.

The primary duty of the Senior Pastor is to shepherd the church through the preaching and teaching of the Bible, the modeling of the Christian life, and by giving general leadership direction, in humble service to the flock. Other duties of the Senior Pastor and any Associate Pastor shall be determined by the Board of Elders. The Senior Pastor shall be a member of all committees and subcommittees of the Church by virtue of his office.

ARTICLE VIII

OTHER OFFICERS

Section A. Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall be a Deacon member who shall be appointed by the Board of Elders. He shall see to the distribution of all funds contributed to the Church for any purpose and shall pay out the same as directed by the Board of Elders.

Section B. Church Clerk.

A Church Clerk shall be appointed each year by the Board of Elders before the Annual Meeting.

Section B. Sunday School Superintendent/Director of Christian Education.

The Director of Christian Education/Sunday School Superintendent shall be appointed by the Board of Elders for a three-year term which will begin upon appointment and shall be subject to an annual evaluation each March.

Section C. Missions Chairman.

The Missions Chairman shall be appointed by the Board of Elders for a three-year term which will begin upon appointment and shall be subject to an annual evaluation each March. The Missions Chairman will recommend the general direction of various missions ministries, such as foreign missionary support, foreign short-term outreach, home missions support, missions conferences, etc. However, the final decision regarding the

direction of the missions ministries will be made by the Board of Elders. The Missions Chairman will form a Missions Committee that will consist of no less than three (3) active church members. December.

ARTICLE IX

MEETINGS

Section A. Annual Meeting.

The Annual Meeting of the Church for hearing reports, review of a recommended budget, voting on major projects as called for by the Board of Elders, and the conducting of other business on the agenda prepared in accordance with Article IX, Section C hereof, shall be held on or about the second week of May last week in January of each year.

Section B. Special Business Meeting.

The Church may be called together for the transaction of any legitimate business by a majority vote of the Board of Elders or upon written request to the Board of Elders signed by a majority percent of the voting church Membership. Notice of such a meeting shall be given in the Church bulletin on two Sundays preceding the day appointed, and the nature of the business to be transacted shall be stated in the notice.

Section C. Procedure.

The Church may transact business with the quorum of one-third of the voting Membership. No official business can be transacted until a quorum is found present. All business at a meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda prepared by the Board of Elders, and all decisions of the Membership, except matters of procedure, shall be made by secret ballot.

ARTICLE X

AMENDMENTS

The Board of Elders or a written request to the Board of Elders signed by twenty-five percent of the voting church Membership may propose such amendments to the constitution as may seem necessary. Such amendments must be approved by the Board of Elders and then submitted to the Membership in written form and printed in the Church bulletin at least two weeks prior to the meeting when the amendments are to be considered. The amendments must be confirmed by a vote of two-thirds of the Membership present at the Annual Meeting or at a special meeting provided for in Article IX.

ARTICLE XI

ORDINANCES

Section A. The Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper shall be administered as frequently as the Board of Elders shall order. This is open to all who confess that Jesus Christ is their Savior and Lord, regardless of Membership at Grace Community Church. **[the Elders extend the right for families or small groups meeting for fellowship, to enjoy the celebration of the Lord's Supper without an Elder present]**

Section B. Baptism.

Baptism shall be administered by the Pastoral staff or an Elder, or any godly man who is so delegated by an Elder, upon the recommendations of the Pastor and the Board of Elders. The mode of baptism shall be immersion.

ARTICLE XII

ORDINATION

As it has happened before and will likely happen again, Spirit-filled men may be called out from among us to proclaim the gospel of the grace of God. Such men may be given a commission to preach and administer the ordinances by an ordination council composed other pastors, elders and such other men as they may invite to participate, and who are unanimous in their conviction that the candidate has the suitable gifts for the ministry. The ordaining council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated effectiveness in Christian service.