

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Statesville, North Carolina

CONSTITUTION

(Changes Adopted March 4, 2007)

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of affirming, preserving, and making secure the principles and liberties of our faith and to the end that this body be governed in an orderly manner, in cooperation with bodies approved by the congregation, we do declare and establish this constitution.

ARTICLE I - NAME

This body shall be known as Grace Baptist Church of Statesville, North Carolina, Inc.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSES AND OBJECTIVES

This church seeks to be a servant of Christ endeavoring to minister to the total needs of people irrespective of their social, racial, and ethnic origin.

This church seeks to cooperate in the global witness to Christ through its financial contributions and to participate and enlist other community and church groups in coping with needs in ways that are in keeping with the values and goals of Jesus Christ and his Church.

This church seeks to increase the joy and celebration of life through a variety of worship, educational, and learning experiences designed to enable the individual, the family, and the church to grow in total and willing commitment to the work of Jesus Christ.

This church seeks to create a ministering congregation where each individual is a responsible minister, committed to the tithe as a minimum of financial discipleship, and committed to a personal commitment of time and energy to ministries as a demonstration of total stewardship.

This church seeks to be a fellowship of acceptance and forgiveness, where each one learns the discipline of "agape" love and the burden of bearing and caring for each other, and where each can discover his/her gifts and talents and can help others do the same.

This church seeks to present Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and to challenge all persons to Christian discipleship.

ARTICLE III - CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

We believe in God, who like a good mother or father, is near to us and strong to help us. We believe in Jesus Christ, in whom we see God; He is for us the way of truth and life. We believe in the Holy Spirit, whose life is in us, giving us new life and healing strength for our spirits.

We believe God created the world, creates humankind in God's own image, and gives us the choice of life or death.

We believe the church is a community of individuals who confess Jesus as Lord and who place their faith and trust in Jesus Christ as revealed in scripture, history, and contemporary experience. As Christians, we are called, nourished, and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a community of love and servant hood.

We believe in the forgiveness of sin. We believe in the reconciling power of God in each life and in the world. We believe that God, through humankind, can bring peace and hope, justice and equality, the relief of suffering and pain, and the final triumph of love and grace.

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

SECTION 1 - All persons who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are eligible for membership.

SECTION 2 - All persons desiring baptism by this church will receive baptism.

SECTION 3 - Persons desiring membership are asked to contact the pastoral staff or a deacon. The following steps are required for membership:

- a. - Complete conferences with the pastoral staff and new member committee designed to orient candidates with this church's concept of discipleship.
- b. - Be received into membership by a majority vote of church members.

ARTICLE V - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1 - The government of the church shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in the membership.

SECTION 2 - Church conference shall be held at least bimonthly. The conference is open to all who wish to attend and all church members are eligible to vote. Each board shall be represented at conference to report its work and make recommendations.

SECTION 3 - All major recommendations coming before the congregation for vote at church conference must be submitted in written form to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the church conference.

SECTION 4 - Church members unable to be present for the vote are to contact their assigned deacon in advance to arrange for an absentee ballot.

SECTION 5 - A majority vote carries in all matters unless otherwise stated in this constitution.

SECTION 6 - All business of the church shall be conducted in church conference according to Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE VI - PASTOR(S)

SECTION 1 - The pastoral search committee shall be nominated by the Church Cabinet and approved by the church. Its mission shall be to seek out and nominate as pastor(s) a minister(s) of the gospel with Christian character and qualifications to fit him/her to be pastor(s) of this church. The committee shall bring only one recommendation at a time for the consideration of the church and no nominations shall be made except by the

committee. Election shall take place at a conference especially set for that purpose no sooner than one week after the nominee has been introduced to the church. The membership shall be given at least one week's notice of that conference. Voting shall be by written ballot and the Church Cabinet shall act as tellers. An affirmative vote of 75% shall be necessary for an extension of a call. Should the recommendation by the committee fail to receive the 75% vote, the committee will be instructed to seek another pastor.

SECTION 2 - The person(s) assuming the role and responsibility of pastor(s) shall possess and exercise such gifts that enable him/her to fulfill the scriptural admonition to be "pastor and teacher, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..." (Ephesians 4: 11-12). The New Testament pattern of a balance between prophetic endeavors and pastoral care is vital to this equipping ministry.

SECTION 3 The pastor(s) shall be charged with the responsibility of the congregation's well-being through:

- a. **Proclamation**-The pastor(s) shall proclaim the gospel through occasions of preaching and teaching during the regularly scheduled services and on special occasions. This will involve preparation of and leadership in worship services, retreats, special classes, Bible studies, and other activities which will enrich the life of the church. The pastor(s) shall work with others to accomplish this end. The pastor(s) shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry of the church and shall, in cooperation with the deacons, provide for a pulpit supply when absent. The pastor(s) shall oversee the administration of the ordinances.
- b. - **Personal contact**-The pastor(s) shall make regular contact with church families and others who express interest in Grace Baptist Church. This includes visits to those who are ill, shut-in, bereaved, or in crisis. Ongoing absenteeism in worship will be considered a crisis event. Pastoral counseling, in whatever setting, is considered a pastoral contact.
- c. - **Congregational Participation** - The pastor(s) shall participate in the lives of the members of the congregation, and shall share, as requested, in their times of crisis and/or joy through the ministry of funeral services, weddings, and other momentous events in the human pilgrimage.
- d. - **Community Involvement**- The pastor(s) shall both participate in and lead the congregation to be involved in issues of need and concern in the larger community. The pastor(s) will foster ecumenical relationships, both locally and through connections with the worldwide Christian community.
- e. - **Administration**- The pastor(s) shall be accountable to the Personnel Committee. The activities and work of church employees and staff shall be under the pastor(s) direction. The pastor(s) shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees. Through shared leadership, the pastor(s) shall consistently work toward a goal of a congregation that is well-organized and functioning.

ARTICLE VII ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND POLICIES

SECTION 1 - THE CHURCH CABINET will be composed of the chairs of the Deacon, Stewardship, Mission, Worship, and Education boards; the elected chair of the Cabinet, and the Church Clerk. The elected chair of the Cabinet and the Church Clerk shall each serve for two years, shall not be the chair of any other board, and shall not serve as any other church officer.

- a. - The Church Cabinet shall be the nominating committee for the church officers, Stewardship, Mission, Worship and Education Boards, Personnel Committee, the Pastoral Search Committee (as needed), all committees including standing committees (flower, ordinance, etc.) and chair of the Cabinet. Nominees will be elected by church vote. The term for committee members shall be determined by the Cabinet. The Cabinet shall be responsible for filling any vacancies in these church offices, boards or committees.
- b. - The Church Cabinet shall coordinate the work of all church officers and boards and shall determine and direct the relationship between officers, boards, standing committees and temporary committees.
- c. - The Church Cabinet shall coordinate the church calendar.
- d. - The Church Cabinet will oversee a personnel committee which will be composed of three members. Duties of the personnel committee will include:
 - 1. Securing and recommending with approval of the congregation any staff as the need arises. In this process appropriate staff members will be consulted before any recommendation is made.
 - 2. Overseeing pastor(s) and staff and being responsible for all employment related issues.
 - 3. Setting personnel policies which will be approved by the Cabinet. Serving as a liaison group for the pastor(s) and other staff and the church.

SECTION 2 - CHURCH OFFICERS

- a. - A moderator shall be elected annually by the church. The pastor(s) and members of the Church Cabinet shall not be eligible to be moderator. It shall be the moderator's duty to moderate all regular and called church conferences. The chair of the Cabinet shall appoint a substitute in the absence of the moderator.
- b. - A clerk shall be elected by the church and serve a two year term. It shall be the duty of the clerk to maintain church records and to attend, or be represented at, all business meetings and at all Cabinet meetings in order to keep minutes of the proceedings.
- c. - A treasurer shall be elected annually by the church. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to insure disbursement by check upon proper authority all funds given to the church, insure maintenance of an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, and to insure preparation of a monthly account to the church. The treasurer's books shall be reviewed as arranged by the Stewardship Board and all books, records, and accounts shall be considered the property of the church. The treasurer shall be an ex officio member of the Stewardship Board if not an elected member. The treasurer may not be chair of the Stewardship Board.
- d. - A financial secretary shall be elected by the church annually. It shall be the duty of the financial secretary to receive and accurately record the contributions to the church and at least annually provide a statement to each contributor. The financial secretary shall assist the treasurer and Stewardship Board in preparing a monthly statement for the church. The financial secretary shall be an ex officio member of the Stewardship Board if not an elected member. The financial secretary may not be chair of the Stewardship Board.

SECTION 3 - CHURCH DIRECTORS - The church shall have three Directors. The Stewardship Board will nominate directors for election by the congregation. Directors

will hold the church property in trust. It shall be the function of the directors to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where signatures of directors are required. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote (requiring an affirmative vote of 75%) of the church authorizing each action.

SECTION 4 - CHURCH BOARDS

There shall be five boards composed of Deacon, Stewardship, Christian Education, Worship and Mission. Except for the Deacon Board, each board shall consist of a minimum of four members. Each board will elect its own chair annually.

a. DEACON BOARD-Deacons are set apart by the church to serve as spiritual leaders (guides) for the congregation. Deacons will serve the people of Grace by interacting with their assigned families, advising and assisting the pastoral staff, and leading the church to be servants to the local and global community.

1. All members of the church twenty-one years and above who have been a member of the church for at least one year will be eligible to serve on this board.
2. The Board shall consist of six members who will serve a term of three years. After a term of service, two years must elapse before a deacon is eligible for reelection.
3. If a vacancy occurs between annual elections, a special election will be held to fill the vacancy; however, if the term created by the vacancy is less than one year, the remaining deacons will determine if another election needs to be held. If the term created by the vacancy is less than one year, the person filling that vacancy shall be eligible for nomination to a new term at the regularly scheduled election.
4. Nominations for deacons will be held on the second and third Sundays in October unless the Deacon Board and the Cabinet agree on a change of dates. Each church member may nominate one person for each vacancy from a list of members who have agreed to serve. This list will be revised annually by the current deacon members.
5. The election will be on the fourth Sunday in October unless the Deacon Board and Cabinet agree on a change of dates. A ballot consisting of twice the number of names necessary for election will be prepared from the list of persons receiving the highest number of nominations. The two deacons rotating off the Board shall act as tellers for the election. In the event of a tie, the runoff election shall be held the following Sunday.
6. Church members unable to be present for the vote are to contact their assigned deacon in advance to arrange for an absentee ballot.

b. CHRISTIAN EDUCATION BOARD-This board will be responsible for all phases of Christian education.

1. It shall plan, administrate, and coordinate all phases of the education and church training of the church. It will work with the church music staff and others to provide music ministry to the church.
2. It shall coordinate the ordering of all educational materials and receive requests for other teaching supplies and aids. It will screen all purchase re-

quests for and oversee the use and management of any church-owned educational equipment.

3. It shall nominate persons for each volunteer leadership position in the education and music programs with final approval from the congregation.
4. It shall research the field of Christian education and provide recommendations for improvement in any phase of the educational ministry.
5. It shall seek excellence in providing the church with a meaningful program of education by periodically sponsoring clinics to help the educational leadership.

c. STEWARDSHIP BOARD-This board will be responsible for guiding the church into the most effective utilization of all its properties-material, financial, and real estate.

1. It shall study the total use of church properties and finances and make recommendations to utilize all church physical resources to the fullest in promoting education, worship, and ministries.
2. It shall review the financial resources of the church and prepare for recommendation to the church an annual budget in keeping with the church's vision of itself as first and foremost a ministering congregation. It shall confer with the other boards who will submit their annual budget needs.
3. It shall arrange the review of the financial records annually.
4. It shall study the condition, state of repair, and appearance of the buildings and grounds, and make arrangements for necessary repairs and improvements. Any such repairs or improvements in excess of 2% of the total annual budget must be approved by the congregation in church conference.
5. It shall supervise the acquisition of any new properties purchased by the church.

d. MISSION BOARD-This board shall promote the concept that every member is a minister by encouraging a high level of congregational participation and uses of resources, both human and monetary.

1. It shall be a vehicle to communicate specific areas of human needs to the congregation and will coordinate and assist in implementing projects to address these needs.
2. It shall strive to investigate and promote new opportunities to serve others both locally and globally constantly increasing social awareness and ministry.
3. It shall coordinate cooperative ministries with other Christian groups to promote Christian kinship and more effectively minister to community and world needs.
4. It shall foster relationships between the congregation and the local community and seek creative ways to involve others in the life of Grace.

e. WORSHIP BOARD-This board shall promote meaningful worship among the church community by helping the congregation fully realize the movement of God's spirit in worship. Whether in a regularly scheduled service or other setting, worship is seen as a reflection of the spiritual life of the congregation.

1. It shall work in partnership with the pastor(s), other boards, committees, and groups to utilize worship to emphasize special projects, days, or events. It shall also provide suggestions, ideas, and leadership for enhancing regular worship services.
2. It shall develop special worship experiences for seasonal celebrations and other significant celebrations that occur in church life.
3. It shall employ many different tools and practices including but not limited to drama, music, poetry, liturgical dance, dramatic readings and meals.
4. It shall review and study the worship format and the desires of the congregation through surveys, one to one discussions, and experimentation.

ARTICLE VIII - AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended, altered, or repealed with an affirmative vote of 75%.

The proposed amendment, alteration, or repeal shall have been presented to the church members in written form at least two weeks prior to the time of voting.

Notice of the conference in which a vote to amend, alter, or repeal the Constitution is to be taken shall be given at least two weeks prior to the time of the conference.