

**BY-LAWS
OF
GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH, INC.**

ARTICLE I - NAME

- 1.01 This Corporation shall be known as GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH, INC. This shall be a non-profit Florida Corporation. This Corporation shall be affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES

- 2.01 The objectives of this Corporation are as follows: To carry out the purposes and objectives of this Corporation as outlined in Article IV of the Articles of Incorporation; to procure and amply provide whatever may be required in the way of physical facilities for GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH, INC.; to administer such facilities for this Church.

ARTICLE III - STATEMENT OF FAITH

- 3.01 The Statement of Faith as found in Article V of the Articles of Incorporation is intended to produce the following character of the Corporation.
- A. Evangelical, faithful to the great truths set forth in the Word of God and expressed in the "mainstream" of historical Christian Orthodoxy.
 - B. Related, without discrimination, to all segments of our society, regardless of cultural, national, social, racial, or professional differences.
 - C. Open, to fellowship with other Christians and Christian Congregations in Pensacola, Gulf Breeze and other areas, especially, but not exclusively, with those of common evangelical interests.
 - D. Lead, by Elders, raised up by the Spirit of God as reflected in the approval of the assembled believers, who serve, and are accountable to, the "Chief Shepherd", whose guide is the Word of God and who receive due honor from the Congregation.
 - E. Committed, to joyfully receive all those who, desiring to identify themselves with the Church, give testimony in the presence of the Elders to their genuine faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and who sincerely desire to assume, with God's help, the responsibility of an active member in this Church.
 - F. Obedient,
 - 1. To the whole counsel of God's Word.
 - 2. To the two Ordinances instituted by the Lord Jesus: Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - a. Baptism: although the Church's "position" on the mode of Baptism shall be that of immersion of responsible believers, those with other convictions will be warmly welcomed into membership, and their views, if voiced in love, will be respected.

- b. The Lord's Supper: with reverence and simplicity this Ordinance shall be observed by the Congregation and will be open to all who believe.
- G. Evangelistic, in its concern that all men hear the Gospel in such a way as to be clearly invited to trust Christ.
- H. Relevant to our contemporaries, with the desire to express the Christian message in contemporary words and ways which will be balanced by the highest respect for that which comes to us from our Christian heritage.
- I. Expectant, we expect God to work in our lives, our families, our Church and our community. We desire to be flexible and sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. We also desire to avoid a hard, rigid Church framework.

ARTICLE IV - MEMBERSHIP IN THE CORPORATION

4.01 Members.

A. Description: The members of this Corporation will comprise the Congregation, have the following qualifications, be elected in the following manner and carry out the following responsibilities:

B. Qualifications:

1. Membership shall be based on a confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and a life exemplary of that confession.
2. It shall be based on an expressed desire to pray for and fellowship with the believers in the Church.
3. It shall be based on an agreement with the Statement of Faith of the Church.
4. There is no minimum age for membership and members are granted voting privileges at age 18.
5. One must complete a membership orientation class. Upon completion of the membership orientation class, prospective members shall meet with the Elders and relate how they came to personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
6. There must be willingness to submit to the authority of the Elder Board in matters of Church discipline.

C. Election:

1. Prospective members shall be interviewed and approved by a 3/4 vote of the Elder Board and presented to the Congregation as members.

D. Responsibilities:

1. To continue to adhere to the qualifications for membership.
2. It is assumed that members will support the ministry of this local Church through practical service and financially through tithes and offerings.

E. Termination: The following are reasons for termination of membership:

1. Resignation.
2. Move from local area.
3. Failure to fulfill responsibilities of members (4.01 D).
4. Items 2. and 3. immediately above determined by 3/4 vote of Elder Board.

4.011 Associate Members - Local

A. Description: The local category of associate membership allows an individual to become a member of the congregation while retaining their membership in a “home church” because:

1. they are here temporarily (e.g. Navy), and expect to return to their “home church”; or
2. they feel they need to retain contact with a home church for financial reasons (e.g. they are in local full-time Christian work and are supported by their home church).

The qualifications, election, responsibilities, and termination are the same as specified for members in paragraphs 4.01B-E. Additionally, the prospective local associate member must present a letter from their home church allowing them to also be an associate member of our congregation.

4.012 Associate Members - Distant

A. Description: The distant category of associate membership allows a member of our congregation who moves from the local area and still considers this their home congregation to retain their membership. This is especially appropriate for missionaries sent out from our congregation who wish to retain church membership in the U.S.

B. Qualifications:

1. The qualifications listed in paragraph 4.01 B.
2. Be an existing member of the congregation.

C. Election:

1. A member leaving the local area must make a request to the Elder Board to be accepted as a distant associate member to preclude their membership being terminated under the stipulations of paragraph 4.01 E 2.
2. Upon such a request a member will be approved as a distant associate member by a 3/4 vote of the Elder Board.

D. Responsibilities:

1. To continue to adhere to the qualifications for membership or paragraph 4.01 B.

2. It is assumed that distant associate members will support the ministry of this local Church through practical service and financially through tithes and offerings when in the local area.

E. Termination: The following are reasons for termination of such membership:

1. Resignation.
2. An extended period of no communication with the Elder board.
3. Failure to fulfill responsibilities of members (4.012 D).
4. Items 2. and 3. immediately above determined by 3/4 vote of Elder Board.

4.02 Elders.

A. Description: An Elder is a man raised up by the Holy Spirit from the Congregation to serve the congregation. He is delegated leadership responsibility by the Congregation and is bestowed the authority to carry out those responsibilities of leadership to govern the Church under the Lordship of Christ, the direction of the Holy Spirit, and the determining policy of the Holy Scriptures. He is an overseer of the total ministry of our Church. He is to be a servant of the body by working with his fellow Elders in providing direction, protecting doctrinal purity, determining policy, encouraging discipleship and maintaining church order and discipline within the fellowship over which God has placed him as a shepherd.

B. Term: An Elder, except Pastors who are Elders, will serve for a year. After election in accordance with Section 4.02F the Elder may be elected for each of the next two successive years if elected for each of such years in accordance with Section 4.02G. An Elder may be elected for a fourth successive one year term if elected in accordance with Section 4.02F. If elected for a fourth successive one year term, an Elder may be elected for each of the next two successive years if elected for each of such years in accordance with Section 4.02G. An Elder must retire for one year following six successive one year terms of office before assuming that office again. In all cases, except for Pastors who are Elders, any man who did not serve as an Elder immediately prior and up to the time of nomination must be elected in accordance with Section 4.02F.

C. Qualifications: An Elder shall be male in gender and shall fulfill the following Scriptural qualifications in I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3.

D. Obligations:

1. To meet monthly concerning the oversight of the Church.
2. To meet annually at the December monthly meeting to elect officers who will take office immediately after the annual meeting of the Congregation.
3. To choose a chairman each year, by simple majority, who will preside over the monthly Elder Board meetings.
4. To meet regularly for prayer and study of Scripture.
5. To meet monthly with Deacons to give direction and encouragement.
6. To gather together semi-annually for an extended retreat.
7. To be available for counsel and visitation when needs arise.

8. To assist the Pastor(s) with the ministry of the Word.
 9. To be actively serving in some area of ministry within the Church
- E. Responsibilities: The Elders should assume the performance of their various responsibilities for one year periods immediately following the annual Congregational meeting. Among these responsibilities may be Treasurer, Christian Education, missions, visitation, evangelism, hospitality, and administration. Any of these responsibilities may be delegated to others, but the Elder Board retains the final authority.
- F. Selection: If called for in Section 4.02B, the following procedure will be followed for electing members to the Board of Elders.
1. All nominations will be made and unanimously approved by the Elder Board.
 2. The nominee accepts the nomination.
 3. A 3/4 vote of the Elder Board for each nominee.
 4. A 2/3 vote by the Deacon Committee for each nominee.
 5. A majority vote by the Congregation for each nominee.
- G. Selection: If called for in Section 4.02B the following procedure will be followed for electing members to the Board of Elders.
1. All nominations will be made and unanimously approved by the Elder Board.
 2. The nominee accepts the nomination.
 3. A 3/4 vote by the Elder Board for each nominee.
- H. Termination of Service: The following are reasons for termination of service. Cases (2) and (3) are accepted by 2/3 vote of the Elder Board and a majority vote of the Deacon Committee. (Elder under consideration not voting.) Pastors that are Elders may only be terminated as Elders in accordance with paragraph 4.03G.
1. Resignation.
 2. Continued behavior which violates the Biblical qualifications for the office.
 3. Continued agreement with doctrine which violates the Statement of Faith of our Church.
 4. 3/4 vote of the Elder Board.
- I. Vacancies: In the event that there is a vacancy during an Elder's term, that vacancy may be filled by unanimous appointment by the Elder Board for the remainder of that year.
- J. Notice and Voting: Twenty-four hours notice is to be given for any regular or special meetings. Voting may be in person or by proxy, executed in writing or orally.

4.03 Pastors.

- A. Description: All Pastors shall be male in gender. The Senior Pastor is to be an Elder of our Church. The Senior Pastor is charged with the oversight, care, feeding, protection, and teaching of the flock. The Senior Pastor is to function within the Elder Board as a leader among equals. The Senior Pastor is to work with his fellow Elders in this ministry, giving full time attention to the teaching and preaching of the Scriptures. His teaching is to be so directed as to equip the members of the Church to minister to one another, evangelize the lost, and so build up the body of Christ.
- B. Term: The Senior Pastor, or other Pastors elected as Elders, shall serve as permanent members of the Elder Board.
- C. Qualifications: To those Scriptures defining the Elders qualifications add especially Ephesians 4:11-16.
- D. Obligations: Beyond those obligations already stated for the Elders, the Pastors should be diligent:
1. To maintain proper study time within their pastoral duties to properly expound the Scriptures.
 2. To promote and sustain the best possible personal relationships with the Congregation as a whole.
 3. To use leadership wisely, realizing that by virtue of their position they are the most visible Elders.
- E. Responsibilities: As Pastor-Teacher, the Senior Pastor shall be the Elder in charge of Christian Education. The Senior Pastor will also be expected:
1. To provide for a continuing and effective pulpit ministry.
 2. To be responsible for the content and quality of all public worship services.
 3. To direct all official counseling services of the Church.
 4. To be responsive to all the Elders in the areas of their obligations and responsibilities.
- F. Selection: The Pastors will be chosen by:
1. A 3/4 vote by the nominating committee appointed by the Elder Board.
 2. A 3/4 vote of the Elder Board.
 3. A 3/4 vote by the Deacon Committee.
 4. A 3/4 vote by the Congregation.
- G. Termination of Service: The following are reasons for termination of service:
1. Resignation: ninety (90) days notice is required.
 2. Continued behavior which violates the Scriptural qualifications of the office. (Effective immediately.) Following one year of service a one to three month severance pay is required as determined by the Elder Board.

3. Continued agreement with doctrine which violates the Statement of Faith of our Church. (Effective immediately.) Following one year of service a one to three month severance pay is required as determined by the Elder Board.
4. Items (2) and (3) will be accepted by a 2/3 vote of the combined Elder Board and Deacon Committee (pastor under consideration not voting).
5. Ineffectiveness of his ministry as determined by 3/4 consent of Elder Board (pastor under consideration not voting) and 3/4 affirmation of the Congregation. (Effective within 60 days with three to four months severance pay to commence after termination as determined by the Elder Board.)
6. Any and all severance pay terminates upon the procurement of gainful employment.

4.04 Deacons.

- A. Description: A Deacon is one who serves in the ministry of our Church. He/She works with his/her fellow Deacons in extending the overseeing ministry of the Elders into the physical needs of the people and property of the Church and responsibilities of this body. Deacons may recommend policy and are to implement policy and administer decisions made by the Elder Board.

Under the Elders' leadership, Deacons serve as a Committee and are to care for and maintain the orderly administration of our fellowship in which God has placed him/her as a Deacon.

- B. Term: A Deacon will serve for a two year period. He/She may succeed himself/herself for one additional term, but he/she may not serve more than two terms consecutively. A Deacon must retire for at least one year following this second consecutive term of office before assuming that office again.

- C. Qualifications: A Deacon shall meet the Scriptural qualifications found in I Timothy 3:8-13 and Acts 6:1-7.

D. Obligations:

1. To meet monthly concerning the administrative responsibilities of the Deacon Committee. At least 24 hours oral or written notice shall be given for all regular or special meetings.
2. To choose a chairman each year, by simple majority, who will preside over the Deacon Committee meetings.
3. To meet monthly with the Elder Board to deal in the business of the Church.
4. To develop and meet regularly with committees formed to administer the responsibilities for the office of Deacon.
5. To meet together at least once a year for an overnight Deacon's retreat.
6. To provide encouragement and to assist the Elders in their ministry.

- F. Responsibilities: The Deacons shall assume their various responsibilities for one year periods immediately following the annual Congregational meeting. Among these

responsibilities may be: Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Ushering, Building maintenance, Grounds maintenance, Nursery maintenance or any other defined area of responsibility appropriate to the role of Deacon as determined by the Elder Board.

G. Selection: The following procedure will be followed for adding members to the Committee of Deacons.

1. All nominations will be made by the Elder Board or Deacon Committee.
2. A 2/3 vote by Deacons.
3. A 3/4 vote of the Elders.
4. Majority vote by the Congregation

H. Termination: The following are reasons for termination of service. Items (2) and (3) will be accepted by a 2/3 vote of the Elder Board and a majority vote of the Deacon Committee. (Deacon under consideration not voting.)

1. Resignation
2. Continued behavior which violates the Biblical qualifications for the office.
3. Continued agreement with doctrine which violates the Statement of Faith of our Church.

I. Vacancies: In the event that there is a vacancy during a Deacon's term, that vacancy will be filled by a nomination by the Deacon Committee, approved by 2/3 vote of the Deacon Committee and 3/4 vote of the Elder Board, for the remainder of that year.

J. Notice and Voting: Twenty-four (24) hours notice is to be given for any regular or special meetings. Voting may be in person or by proxy, executed in writing or orally.

K. Elders Veto. The Elder Board may veto any decision of the Deacon Committee by a 3/4 vote of the Elder Board.

ARTICLE V - MEETING OF MEMBERS

- 5.01 Annual Meeting. The annual meeting of the membership of this Congregation shall be held on the second Tuesday in January of each year, one of the purposes of which shall be the election of Elders and Deacons for the ensuing term, all of whom shall take office immediately following the Annual Meeting.
- 5.02 Special Meetings. Special Meetings may be held at the call of the president, 2/3 vote of the Elder Board, or by written request of 51% of the membership.
- 5.03 Notice. At least six (6) days notice shall be given by announcement from the pulpit for all annual or special meetings.
- 5.04 Quorum. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but if at any meeting there shall be less than a quorum, a majority of those present may adjourn the meeting from time to time and place to place.

- 5.05 Voting. Every member and local associate member of the Congregation, in good standing, shall have the right to be entitled to one vote, in person, upon every proposal properly submitted to vote at any meeting of the Congregation. Distant associate members do not have voting privileges

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

- 6.01 Number and Term of the Officers of the Corporation. The Officers of the Corporation shall be composed of four persons (President, Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and Secretary). Each Officer shall hold office for the term for which he is elected and qualified.

A. President. The President shall:

1. Preside at all meetings of the Corporation, or delegate that authority to another member.
2. Perform all other duties usually pertaining to the Office of President.

B. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall:

1. Be custodian of all funds and securities of the Corporation and collect interest thereon and is authorized to disperse funds appropriately.
2. Keep a record of the accounts of the Corporation and report thereon at each regular meeting of the Corporation.
3. Make report at the Annual Meeting and special reports when requested.
4. Prepare and file reports and returns required by all governmental agencies.
5. Maintain appropriate Church insurance coverage.

C. Financial Secretary. The Financial Secretary shall:

1. Collect and deposit all moneys of the Corporation in the name of the Corporation in a bank or banks selected and designated by the Corporation.
2. Prepare and file reports at Annual Meetings, Elder Board Meetings and other meetings as requested.

D. Secretary. The Secretary shall:

1. Record the minutes of all meetings;
2. Write up the minutes the day following the meeting;
3. Confer with the President for possible omissions;
4. Have custody of the seal of the Corporation;
5. Give notice of all meetings as provided herein;
6. Take attendance record at meetings and maintain membership roster;
7. Maintain committee reports;
8. Carry on all necessary correspondence of the Corporation;

9. Perform such other duties as may be delegated to him by the Corporation.

- 6.02 Duties of the Officers. The Officers shall assume responsibilities to implement the decisions and policies established by the Elder Board as such pertain to their particular office.
- 6.03 Selection. The President shall be elected from among the Elder Board and all other officers shall be elected by the Elder Board at the annual meeting of the Elder Board and shall take office immediately following the annual Congregational meeting and shall serve until the next annual meeting of the Congregation or until their successors are appointed and take office.
- 6.04 Vacancies. Vacancies among the Officers shall be filled by unanimous appointment made by the Elder Board.

ARTICLE VII - FISCAL YEAR

- 7.01 The fiscal year of the Corporation shall be January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE VIII - EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

- 8.01 The Elder Board shall adopt in writing, employment policies for each employee.
- 8.02 These policies will be reviewed for periodic adjustment.
- 8.03 These policies shall govern the employment of all personnel hired by the Corporation.

ARTICLE IX - RULES OF ORDER

- 9.01 "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these By-Laws.

ARTICLE X - AMENDMENTS

- 10.01 The Corporation may later amend, revise, add to, repeal or rescind these By-Laws and/or adopt new By-Laws at pleasure by a 3/4 vote of the Elder Board and a 2/3 vote of the Deacon Committee, provided that notice of the proposed alteration, amendment, revision, addition, repeal, or rescision of the By-Laws or adoption of new By-Laws shall have been given at least thirty days preceding the appropriate meeting.