

GRACE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH
Denison, Iowa

CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

We, the members of Grace Evangelical Free Church of Denison, Iowa, in order to carry out more efficiently the commission given by the Lord Jesus Christ to His church, do ordain and establish the following Constitution to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE II

1.100 - The name of this organization shall be Grace Evangelical Free Church of Denison, Iowa.

ARTICLE II

2.100 - We are committed to sharing the gospel by reaching out with God's love, mercy and grace.

ARTICLE III

3.100 - The corporate existence of the Church begins on the date the certificate of incorporation is issued by the Secretary of State of the state of Iowa and shall continue perpetually thereafter unless dissolved as provided by law.

3.200 - The Church is organized exclusively for the charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes within the meaning of 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

3.300 - No part of the net earnings shall inure to the benefit of any director or officer of the Church or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation for services rendered to or for the Church affecting one or more purposes).

3.400 - No officer of the Church, or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any Church assets upon dissolution of the Church.

3.500 - No substantial part of the activities of the Church shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, except as otherwise permitted in 501(h) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Church shall not participate in or intervene in (including the publishing or distributing of statements) a political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

3.600 - Notwithstanding any other provision of these Articles, the Church shall not conduct

crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

- 5.104 - **The Work of Christ** - We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.
- 5.105 - **The Holy Spirit** - We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.
- 5.106 - **The Church** - We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.
- 5.107 - **Christian Living** - We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.
- 5.108 - **Christ's Return** - We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.
- 5.109 - **Response and Eternal Destiny** - We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

ARTICLE VI

MEMBERSHIP

9.400 - In case of the dissolution of the Church organization, the property shall be of America, to enable said Conference to renew the work or use the values assigned to the Central District Conference of the Evangelical Free Church thereof for further gospel enterprises. The Church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the Church has not held an annual meeting for three years or when less than six members remain.

ARTICLE X

AMENDMENTS

10.100 - Amendments to this Constitution must be submitted to the members in writing and adopted as a preliminary step at a regular congregational meeting of the Church at least three months prior to the annual meeting. At that annual meeting, amendments may be acted upon for final adoption; however they must be acted upon as originally adopted and without further amendment. Such amendments must receive the affirmative vote of sixty-six percent (66%) majority of the quorum present at both meetings.

Adopted - March 3, 2004
Current as of: January 15, 2017

BYLAWS
Current as of 01/31/2021

ARTICLE I

MEMBERSHIP PROCEDURES

1.100 - ACCEPTING PROCEDURES

- 1.101 - A person who is a member of an organization that has beliefs that are antithetical to the church's Statement of Faith (Article V of our constitution) may not be a member of this church. Anyone desiring membership must first renounce his/her membership in that organization and renounce the beliefs that are not in accordance with the church's Statement of Faith (1 Timothy 1:3-4, 6:3-6, 2 Peter 2:1-9).
- 1.102 - Those seeking membership are required to participate in a membership information class to be offered periodically.
- 1.103 - Those professing faith in Christ and desiring membership shall meet with an elder or elders who will determine if the person should be recommended to the Elder Board for church membership.
- 1.104 - When the Elder Board is confident of the applicant's qualifications, as stated in Article VI of the Constitution, they shall recommend that person to the congregation for membership.
- 1.105 - Members of the congregation will be encouraged to give input regarding the suitability of the person for church membership over at least a 2 week period from the time the person is recommended by the board to the congregation.
- 1.106 - After hearing and discerning the congregation's input, the Elder Board will decide on whether to confirm upon or deny the person church membership.
- 1.107 - Those confirmed shall become members of the church when they are announced at the next quarterly, annual, or called congregational meeting. They will be given the opportunity to share their faith story, and be welcomed into the congregation at that time.

1.200 - TERMINATION PROCEDURES

- 1.201 - The Elder Board may write a letter of recommendation for membership transfer at its discretion.
- 1.202 - The Elder Board will remove a person's name from the membership roll upon receiving a written request from that member.
- 1.203 - A member may be removed from the membership by the Elder Board when he/she has not attended or communicated with the church for one year. The Elder Board

will attempt to notify them of their action.

1.204 - A person's membership may be terminated for disciplinary reasons according to Article III of these Bylaws.

1.300 - MEMBERSHIP PRIVILEGES

1.301 - A person who is at least 16 years of age may become a member with full voting rights.

1.302 - A member may be elected to any office for which he/she meets the Biblical qualifications.

1.303 - A former member who has withdrawn or been dismissed from membership has no right or claim to any church property.

ARTICLE II

LEADERSHIP

2.000 - LEADERSHIP

The affairs of the congregation will be conducted by the Elder Board and the Councils defined in our Church Governance Policy.

2.001 – ELDER BOARD

The Board will be composed of the senior pastor, one additional pastor (if applicable) and a group of men not on the church's full-time staff. They will each be nominated by the Elder Board and approved by the congregation. The ratio of non-staff to staff on the Elder Board should always be at least 2:1. The Elder Board will be responsible for the oversight of the entire church including the spiritual condition and spiritual issues of the congregation.
Each elder shall serve on at least one Council.

2.0011 - The Elder Board will have a chairman (not necessarily the senior pastor) and a recording secretary.

2.002 - COMMITTEES

Committees will be created by the Elder Board as needed.

- Pastoral Search (see 5.300)

2.003 - COUNCILS

A set of Church Councils shall be responsible for the daily work of the church as described in our Church Governance Policy.

2.200 – DUTIES, STRUCTURE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDER BOARD MEMBERS

2.201 - DUTIES

1. Lead and encourage the congregation in prayer for one another and model it by being accountable to each other in personally praying for the congregation.
2. Aspire to be a living model of a Christ-like life.
3. Assist the pastors in shepherding the congregation.
4. Support the pastors with maintaining ~~his~~ their Christian character
5. Process applicants for membership
6. Lead the congregation in achieving its goals and projecting its vision
7. Apply Biblical discipline in the spirit of Christian love
8. Oversee the spiritual functions of the church
9. Oversee the activity of the Church Councils as described in the Church Governance Policy

2.210 – QUALIFICATIONS OF AN ELDER BOARD MEMBER

2.211 - Must be a member of the church, a man in good standing with people of the church

2.212 - Realizing, that in our humanness we all fail to fully live up to Scripture, we ask our leadership to strive for the qualities of leaders in I Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

2.213 – The Elder Board member must have the congregation's spiritual health and faithfulness in mind and be diligent in helping the pastors perform their duties well.

2.300 – OTHER LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

2.301 - TREASURER

1. Dispense the funds as directed by the congregation.
2. Provide monthly financial reports to the applicable Council and quarterly reports at Congregational meetings.
3. Write all checks

2.302 - FINANCIAL SECRETARY

1. Receive, record and deposit in the church account the contributions to the church.
2. Provide records to donors to meet the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service.
3. Sign checks along with other designated signators approved by the applicable Council
4. Secure two members to count all offerings.

2.400 - If any leader becomes unqualified the Elder Board shall ask for that person's resignation by a 51% majority vote of all Elder Board members not including that person's vote. If that person does not resign, he will be removed from office by a 51% majority vote of the members voting at a congregational meeting.

ARTICLE III

DISCIPLINE

3.100 - The purpose of discipline is to restore a person to faith and fellowship.

3.200 - The Elder Board will confront persons who digress from Scripture, the church Constitution or Bylaws or disrupt the fellowship according to the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-5.

3.300 - No charge against any person shall be brought before the church by any individual or group unless the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 and Galatians 6:1-2 are followed. At that time such charges shall be given in writing with a personal signature to the Elder Board. The Elder Board shall look into the matter and confer with the accused. If the Elder Board is satisfied that the charges made are true, and if the accused shows no sign of repentance, the Elder Board shall take action. Should the Elder Board's action seem unfair, the accused shall have the option of direct appeal to the congregation at a duly called congregational meeting.

3.400 - No member shall be expelled until efforts have been made to reclaim him/her for Christ and the church, in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17, II Thessalonians 3:13-15, and Galatians 6:1-2. If these efforts fail, that person shall be expelled from membership by a simple majority vote (51%) of the members voting at a congregational meeting.

ARTICLE IV

CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

4.100 - ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

The fiscal year is the calendar year with the annual congregational meeting held in January on a date set by the Elder Board. At this meeting any nominations shall be presented, the proposed budget acted upon, and a spiritual vision proposed for the new year. All printed reports will be distributed to the members prior to this meeting.

4.200 - MANDATED CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

One additional mandated congregational meeting will be held in September on a date set by the Elder Board. The annual election of officers will normally be held at the January meeting.

4.300 - SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Special congregational meetings will be called at the request of either a pastor, the Elder Board or when three eligible members, representing three families, submit a written request for a special meeting to the Elder Board. The date will be set by the Elder Board and announced with its purpose(s) at two consecutive Sunday worship services or by written notice to the members and announced at one Sunday worship service. The meeting will be limited to the stated purpose(s).

4.400 - EMERGENCY CONGREGATIONAL MEETINGS

Emergency congregational meetings may be called by the Elder Board. They are responsible to notify the members of this meeting. Emergency congregational meetings are only for situations that cannot wait for a regular or special congregational meeting.

4.500 - CONDUCT

All congregational meetings will be conducted in a CHRIST-LIKE spirit and Robert's Rules of Order will be used when deemed necessary unless the Elder Board Requests another method and the Congregation approves (51% majority).

ARTICLE V

PASTORS

5.100 - DUTIES

5.110 - SENIOR PASTOR DUTIES

1. The senior pastor shall perform all the Scriptural duties of the office under the guidance of the Holy Spirit including freedom of the pulpit. (Ephesians 4:11-16) These duties shall include teaching the Word of God for the equipping of the saints, keeping the congregation focused on its purpose, and projecting a vision which fulfills that purpose.
2. He shall be a voting member of the Elder Board
3. He shall not qualify for any other elected church office
4. He shall be accountable to the Elder Board
5. He shall perform Weddings, Funerals and any other worship occasions in accordance with Biblical principles and any Policy Guidelines that the Congregation may approve (e.g. Grace Church Marriage Counseling and Wedding Policy)

5.120 - ASSOCIATE PASTOR DUTIES

1. All Associate pastors shall perform the Scriptural duties applicable to their job description under the guidance of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:11-16). These duties shall be outlined in each associate pastor's job description.
2. Exactly One Associate Pastor shall be a voting member of the Elder Board
3. He shall not qualify for any other elected church office

4. He shall be accountable to the Elder Board
5. He shall perform Weddings, Funerals and any other worship occasions in accordance with Biblical principles and any Policy Guidelines that the Congregation may approve (e.g. Grace Church Marriage Counseling and Wedding Policy)

5.200 - QUALIFICATIONS

1. The qualifications for the pastors shall be as found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9
2. The senior pastor shall exhibit the spiritual gifts of the pastor/teacher. (Ephesians 4:11-12)
3. Each associate pastor shall exhibit the spiritual gifts in line with their corresponding job description
4. Each Pastor shall hold to the Statement of Faith (Constitution Article V) without reservation
5. At the time of candidating, each pastor shall state in writing any differences of opinion they have with the Constitution or Bylaws
6. Each Pastor is encouraged to be credentialed or actively pursuing credentialing with the Evangelical Free Church of America.

5.300 - CALLING A PASTOR

1. The Pastoral Search Committee will be composed of two members of the Elder Board (appointed by the Board) and three members elected by the congregation. The Senior Pastor will also be on any Pastoral Search Committee for an Associate Pastor
2. The duties of the Search Committee shall be (without unnecessary delay) to seek advice from the District Superintendent, investigate, interview and invite to candidate a man of good report who meets the qualifications stated in 5.200.
3. After the time of candidating, the Pastoral Search Committee shall give their recommendation to the congregation at a congregational meeting. At this time a call to become a pastor may be extended to the candidate who receives an 85% vote of the members voting at that congregational meeting.
4. A candidate shall be eliminated before another is invited to candidate.

5.400 - TERMINATION

1. Each pastor shall serve until he resigns or is dismissed with 30 days notice given by either party or as mutually agreed upon.
2. If a pastor should depart from the Word of God in conduct or doctrine as defined in the Constitution or Bylaws, or if he has lost the confidence of the congregation, he shall be counseled in love by the Elder Board. Should this not have the desired result, he shall be dismissed by a 66% majority vote of the members voting at a congregational meeting.
3. Heresy and conduct unbecoming a pastor are grounds for immediate dismissal according the procedure outlined in 2. above. Severance pay may or may not be

extended for 30 days.

5.500 - MEMBERSHIP

Each pastor and his wife shall become members upon assuming the position.

ARTICLE VI

CONGREGATIONAL VOTING AND ELECTIONS

6.100 - PROCEDURE

1. The quorum for all congregational meetings shall be 35% of eligible members.
2. If a quorum is not achieved, a second congregational meeting will be called and the quorum shall be the eligible members present.
3. Unless otherwise specified, all votes require a 51% majority vote of the members present.

6.200 – NOMINATIONS

6.202 – NOMINATIONS FOR THE ELDER BOARD

1. Congregational members will be encouraged to submit elder recommendations to the Elder Board for their consideration
2. The Elder Board shall then nominate members for service on the Elder Board
3. Nominations will not be accepted from the floor
4. The Congregation will then approve or disapprove of the potential Elder at a Congregational meeting.

6.300 - APPOINTMENTS

The Elder Board may appoint someone to temporarily fill a vacant office until the next congregational meeting. The Elder Board will then follow the procedure in 6.202 to complete the unexpired or unfilled term.

6.400 - LIMITATIONS

1. Elder Board members shall be elected for a term of four years with terms staggered as much as possible. The composition of the Elder Board will be reevaluated at the end of each term. Elders will have no term limits.
2. The treasurer and financial secretary shall be elected for a one year term with no term limits.

ARTICLE VII

AMENDMENTS

7.100 - Amendments to these Bylaws must be submitted by a member to the Elder Board who shall inform the members in writing at least two weeks before a congregational meeting. The proposed amendment will be announced at least once

on a Sunday morning. At the congregational meeting the amendment will be discussed and shall be passed if it receives a 66% majority vote of the members voting.

Originally Adopted - August 18, 2004
Revised as Indicated

Elder Board additions/changes approved at Congregational Meeting on April 29, 2012