



Grace Church

Bylaws

Effective 1/1/2021

Name

The name of this corporation is Grace Baptist Church of Belleville. This corporation will be referred to as the "Church" and also referred to in the Bylaws and may do business under the name(s) "Grace Church", "Grace Baptist Church", "Grace Baptist Church of Belleville", "Grace Church of Belleville", or any other name the Pastors/Elders shall determine.

Mission Statement

Grace Church exists to bring glory to God by making disciples through worship, community outreach and service. The church shall exist to be a place where people far from God can come to experience God.

Offices

The office for business and worship will be held at 214 N Grand in Belleville, AR in Yell County

The Pastors/Elders shall have the power to change offices to another location if deemed necessary. The Pastors/Elders shall have the power to establish other offices, campuses, sites if needed for the growth of the organization

Nonprofit Status

Grace Church is a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the state of Arkansas

Purpose

Grace Church was formed and shall be operated for religious, charitable, and educational purposes to promote the Christian religion.

Grace Church has the authority to ordain, appoint, employ, and/or discharge ministers of the gospel. Grace Church will provide a place of worship.

Grace Church will also provide opportunities for outreach within the community of Belleville, AR and also in areas where the Pastor/Elders/Deacons see a need is necessary.

Grace Church will have the authority to disburse funds as deemed necessary for outreach purposes as well as maintenance of the church.

Affiliation

Grace Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Grace Church will be recognized as a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, and a member of the River Valley Association. Grace Church will give financially to the Convention and the Association as deemed necessary by the Pastor/Elders.

Meetings

Meetings for public worship will be held at times and places provided under the direction of the Pastor/Elders.

Church business meetings shall be called when deemed necessary by the Pastor/Elders, or for special meetings when the church would need to purchase, borrow, transfer funds in an amount that exceeds eighty (80%) percent of the operating budget. Announcement of upcoming business meeting must be publically announced two (2) weeks prior to said business meeting.

Articles of Faith

Christian faith and practice is the belief that God spoke the world into existence and that God spoke into the world through the person and work of Jesus Christ, which is accurately revealed in the Christian Bible.

The Bible is the inspired, inerrant and sufficient Word of God and is the ultimate authority for life, faith and morals. The Bible itself is what we as Believers and the Church are in ultimate submission to.

Members of Grace Church have the responsibility and opportunity to engage the Pastor/Elders on areas of theological questions or disagreement. However, membership of Grace Church carries with it the understanding that the Pastor/Elders/Deacons function under the authority of the Bible and application for the purpose of Church doctrine, practice, policy and discipline.

What We Believe

The following statement represents the core beliefs of Grace Church from a biblical and historical perspective. While church members are not required to fully understand or articulate all aspects, the explicit rejection of any part of it could disqualify one from membership in Grace Church. The theological views of Grace Church come strictly from the Bible and no other outside source. If revisions need to be made to help members better understand, it will be at the discretion of the Pastor/Elders. It will also be the duty of the Pastor/Elders to communicate those revisions with the church body.

*The Scriptures are true, authoritative and sufficient (Psalm 19:7-11; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21).

*There is only one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 46:9-10; John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5).

*The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. They are all One Triune God working as three. (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 110:1; Matthew 3: 13-17; Matthew 28: 18-20; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

*All mankind (Christ excluded), by birth and action is a sinner (Genesis 6:5; Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:23; 5:8, 12-21, 7:18; Ephesians 2:1-3).

*The deserved penalty for sin is death, both physical and spiritual (Genesis 2:15-17; Genesis 3:19, Romans 5:12; 6:23, James 1:14-15).

*Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, was born of a virgin and is both fully God and fully man (Matthew 1:20; Luke 2:52; John 1:1-4, 14; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3).

*Jesus Christ died as my substitute to pay the penalty for my sin (John 1:29; 10:1-18, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 3:18).

*Jesus Christ physically rose from the dead (Matthew 28:1-20; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-53; John 1:20-21:25; 1 Corinthians 15:12-34).

*Jesus Christ physically ascended into heaven and will one day physically return (John 14:3; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Hebrews 9:28; 1 John 3:2; Revelation 1:7).

*There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead. Those who trust in Jesus Christ alone will be raised to eternal reward. Those who have not trusted in Jesus Christ will be raised to eternal punishment (Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

*Only by trusting in the person and work of Jesus Christ alone can a person be reconciled to God and experience salvation, true life, and joy (John 3:16-18, 14:6; Acts 4:12; Romans 3:21-26; 1 Timothy 2: 5-6).

Marriage

It is the biblical position that marriage involves the union of one man and one woman. Though various cultures and customs have evolving definitions of marriage, it is God alone who has ultimate authority to prescribe and describe the marital relationship (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-12). Grace Church holds to this position.

Grace Church reserves the right to deny marriage that goes against scripture.

Membership

Membership in Grace Church is predicated on being a genuine follower of Jesus through having a salvation experience of responding by faith. In addition, all members shall have or will need to complete the requirements of becoming a Covenant Member. Covenant classes will be provided semi-annually, or on a need to be basis, and taught by the pastor or staff member or an elder. Members prior to the By-Laws will be grandfathered in as a Covenant Member.

Membership within a local church carries both privileges and responsibilities. Members of Grace Church are to be held accountable to the responsibilities of being a Christ follower. Standards for being a member of Grace Church are laid out in the Covenant Membership Guidelines.

Requesting of membership can be denied by the pastor and/or elders; but must carry with it a distinctive reason as to why it is being denied.

The Members of Grace Church shall vote on the matters of: the annual operating budget; any loan that results of a debt exceeding eighty percent (80%) of the current, annual operating budget; merger or closing of the church at any location; any proposed change to these Bylaws that would reduce or revoke a right granted to the members of the church; and other actions deemed major by the Pastor/Elders.

The time, place and nature of upcoming votes will be communicated to the church body at least fourteen (14) days in advance to give church members an opportunity to submit questions, comments and concerns, which will be considered by the Pastor/Elders on a case-by-case basis. Voting shall take place during public worship services or a special business meeting as determined by the Pastor/Elders. Only Covenant Members shall be permitted to vote. A ballot vote is to be signed. Unsigned votes will not be counted. A simple majority, defined as a result greater than 50% shall constitute a passing vote. Votes will be tallied by two (2) or more elders/trustees. Voting results shall be communicated to the Covenant Members within a timely manner. Ballots will be maintained for ten (10) days and then destroyed.

In the case of a tie vote from the church body, the elders shall carry the burden of making the final decision.

Dispute resolutions will take place in a Leadership Meeting consisting of the Pastor/Elders/Deacons and will be taken on a case by case approach. The Covenant Member reserves the right to request a time in the Elder Meeting to share concerns as pertains to the body of believers.

Membership can be removed by a unanimous vote of the Pastor/Elders as pertains to church discipline. Other membership can be removed through voluntary removal of church membership, death, or any other avenue as deemed necessary by the Pastor/Elders.

Church Ordinances

The two ordinances that Grace Church observes is Baptism by emersion and The Lord's Supper.

When a candidate expresses interest in baptism, that candidate will meet with the pastor or elder to go through a statement of faith. If the candidate expresses knowledge of being a sinner and expresses faith in Christ, a time will be set aside for the candidate to be baptized.

The Lord's Supper will be observed at times set aside by the pastor and/or elders. Grace Church is an "open communion" church and will not exclude anyone from partaking in the Lord's Supper. Although observed corporately, the Lord's Supper is between the individual and God.

Church Leadership, Elders, Deacons, Pastors, Support Staff

The Leadership Team of the church will consist of the Pastor, Elders, Deacons, and other support staff as deemed necessary by the Elders. The Pastor and Staff will meet regularly with the team(s) to work through any issues, needs, upcoming events, etc.

The overall policy, control, direction, and management of the operations and finances of Grace Church shall be burdened by the Elders. The Elders will be designated and voted upon by the church to operate and govern on a term of minimum three (3) years and no more than five (5) years. The Elder can be reappointed after one (1) year. An Elder can resign from his duty at any time, but will be required to wait the one (1) year before being reappointed. The Elders are entrusted by the church to be Godly leaders, putting their personal preferences to the side, as the church seeks to glorify God in its day to day operations.

Qualifications for Elders will be as follows: The minimum qualifications shall not be less than those listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. In addition to the minimum qualifications given in Scripture, Elders must be Covenant Members who fully agree to Church's Statement of Faith, and are actively involved in the ministry of the Church. The appointment of an Elder will be voted on by the Elder Board. This vote will be 75% to be a passing vote.

The Elders of the Church shall vote on the matters of appointment of any Elder, doctrinal issues, removal of any Elder (for disciplinary reasons), and other actions deemed major by the Elders. Elder votes on any matter may be communicated to the church body at the sole discretion of the Elders; other than a vote on the appointment of any Elder. This vote will be 75% to be a passing vote.

An Elder to be appointed will be voted upon by the church body after being presented by the Elder Board as a recommendation; only after he has been tested and approved and meet the requirements set forth by scripture and the standards of Grace Church. A passing vote by the church body will be a vote greater than fifty (50%) percent.

The Elders shall make the final decision in regards to any ecclesiastical or doctrinal questions.

The Elder Board shall consist of a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary. These offices shall be nominated and voted upon by the Elders in a closed session. Each office will be on a two (2) year basis. Unless the term runs out. In that case, a new elder will be nominated and voted on in a closes session. The Chairman's duties will be to lead the Elder meetings and pass along information to the church body as deemed necessary. The Vice-Chairman's duties will be to exercise the powers of the Chairman if for any matter the Chairman is unavailable. The Secretary's duties will be to keep records of the meetings and other duties as assigned by the Elder Board.

Deacons will be appointed by the Elders and voted on by the church body after the person has been tested and approved as scripture dictates in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A deacon is to serve a minimum term of three (3) years and no more than five (5) years with a year off between terms. The role of a deacon is to support the church body in a way that unifies and edifies the members. The deacon can and shall conduct periodic visits with various church members to help meet their needs as scripture lays out in Acts 6:1-6

A Deacon can be removed for a valid cause. The Deacon will have the opportunity to answer questions or concerns before the Elder Board and Deacon Body. A Deacon (not under disciplinary action) may also step down from his position as deacon with a one (1) span before being reconsidered for deacon.

Pastors and Support Staff must meet Biblical requirements to serve in such office.

Grace Church will be responsible for the licensing and/or ordination of the offices. All ordained persons will be expected to assist in baptisms, communion, prayer, and other ministerial duties (licensed individuals); such as weddings, funerals, or any area that may need to be filled at the time.

Church Discipline

Church discipline is a necessary mark of a healthy church and shall be applied in cases of sexual misconduct, gossip, divisiveness, outbursts, dishonesty, and various other expressions of sin. In accordance with the biblical pattern generally outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, a person who evidences such sin will be confronted in an initial one-on-one meeting with an elder, followed by ministerial and pastoral staff and elders.

Where the steps of discipline are exhausted in cases of unrepentant and/or habitual sin, the pastor along with the elders will consider removing a person from membership with the hope of eventual reconciliation and restoration. This removal may or may not include a prohibition to attend church services and events, depending on the circumstances. Those disciplined can be restored to fellowship if the pastor and elders have determined that repentance has occurred.

Financial Transactions

The elder board may authorize an individual elder, officer, employee or agent of the Church to enter into a contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Church. This authority may be limited to a specific contract or instrument, or it may extend to any number of transactions deemed necessary by the elders. This authority is given and must be typed out on a church letterhead that is signed by the pastor and chairman of the elder board.

All funds of the Church shall be deposited to the credit of the Church in banks, trust companies, or other depositories that the elder board selects.

The Pastor/Elders may accept on behalf of the Church any contribution, gift, or devise for the general purposes or any special purpose of the Church including, but not limited to, gifts of money, annuity arrangements, securities, and other tangible and intangible personal property, real property, and interest therein. If the giver requests a receipt for tax purposes, the financial secretary may hand write a receipt, but will not be required to put a dollar amount on the receipt unless it is gift of money.

Any gift given to the church can and may be used in other areas to further the operation of the church. If designated monies need to be moved around or if any other financial transaction needs to be made, the elders will have the final say as to where the gift/money is designated to.

The fiscal year shall begin in January and end the following December. This process is to be repeated every January.

Dissolution and/or Mergers

If in the event the church ceases to be an autonomous church and can no longer function as a congregation, all monies and properties will be designated by the elders and then voted on the by the church body as to where the monies and properties are to go. This could go to an existing church, the local association, or any other local ministry.

If the church merges with an existing church, all assets, properties, memberships will fall under the existing church's polices. If Grace Church accepts the merger of another church, all the other church's assets, properties, memberships will fall under the government of Grace Church in accordance to and with respect to the other church.

Amendments and Alterations

Updating the By-Laws may be done with the recommendation of the Elders and voted on by the church in a business meeting. The business meeting can be a special called meeting or a regularly scheduled. The church body will be given four (4) weeks to read through, pray through, ask questions and etc. as they prepare to vote. Those voting must be Covenant Members.