

CONSTITUTION

Grace Chapel, Inc.
Skaneateles, New York 13152

PREAMBLE

Believing that the New Testament teaches the local church to be a sovereign body, responsible only to God and acknowledging no other authority than Jesus Christ, we declare ourselves to be a separate and independent body, administering our own government without reference or subordination to any outside ecclesiastical authority.

COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, we do in the presence of God and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with one another as one body in Christ, and we engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to seek the salvation of souls; to walk together in Christian love; to strive for spiritual growth and maturity; to strive for the advancement of this church; to sustain its ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expense of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel. We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to educate our children in Scripture, doctrine and personal faith and practice; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian compassion and courtesy in speech. "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

ARTICLE I

NAME

The name of this church is Grace Chapel, Inc. of Skaneateles, New York.

ARTICLE II

DOCTRINE

We of Grace Chapel, Inc. of non-denominational Christian persuasion, accept the Scriptures as our authority in matters of faith and practice, and support the following confession of faith as our interpretation of the Bible.

GRACE CHAPEL DOCTRINE

DOCTRINE

1. We believe the Old and New Testaments to be verbally inspired by God; inerrant in the original manuscripts; and the supreme and final authority in faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; John 10:35)
2. We believe in one God: holy, eternal, self-existent, and self-revealing in three distinct persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Creator of the heaven and earth. (Mark 12:29; John 10:30, Acts 5:3,4; Revelation 4:8)
3. We believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, His perfect deity and humanity; His substitutionary atonement for sin, His bodily resurrection, His visible, imminent, pre-millennial return for His Church; His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years, and His eternal reign with the Father in the New Heaven and the New Earth. (Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; Luke 1:35; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 4:14-16; John 20:25-28; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Revelation 19:11-21)
4. We believe in the personality of the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of sin, regenerates, indwells, baptizes, seals and sanctifies all who become children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 16:8-11, 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 12:13; Ephesians 4:30; Romans 8:14)
5. We believe that man was directly created in the image of God; but in sinning, brought both spiritual and physical death to himself and posterity, who have within themselves no possible means of recovery or

salvation outside of Jesus Christ. (Genesis 1:26-28; 2:7; 3:1-24; Romans 3:23; 5:12; 7:18; 3:19)

6. We believe in salvation by grace, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; the new birth by the Holy Spirit, in whom all true believers have a present possession; in eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation and every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness. (Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:3; John 10:27-30; John 5:24)
7. We believe in the personality of the devil, the archenemy of God and man, and in eternal conscious punishment of all unbelievers and their father, the devil, in a literal place of eternal punishment. (Literal meaning the actual place of torment.) (Matthew 4:1-11; Revelation 12:9-11; Revelation 20:11-15; Luke 16:19-31)
8. We believe that the Church is an elect company of believers; the body of Christ chosen by God to glorify Jesus Christ by an aggressive effort to disciple nations through the preaching of the Gospel. (John 15:16; Ephesians 1:10-12; Matthew 28:18-20)
9. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has gone to prepare a place for all the saved; that their souls go to be with Him at death; that their bodies will be resurrected and transformed at His second coming, at which time they will be rewarded according to their works. (John 14:1-6; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10; 1 Corinthians 15:12-50; Revelation 22:12)
10. We believe that the Church shall, in all its endeavors, be supported by God's financial plan of tithe and offering. (Malachi 3:10)
11. We believe that the ordinances of the Church, given by our Lord, are Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion). (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 8:38,39; Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12; Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 10:16, 11. 23)

ARTICLE III

ORDINANCES

The Lord Jesus Christ gave the church two ordinances, Baptism and Communion, for all who have accepted Christ as Savior. These two ordinances shall be conducted in their scriptural order and manner.

ARTICLE IV

MEMBERSHIP

Any person professing faith in Jesus Christ, and having received Him as Savior and Lord, and being 18 years of age or older, may be eligible for membership in the church.

Procedure of Reception of Members into the Church: If a person desires to become a member of this church, they shall make application to the elders. All candidates are required to complete a Grace Chapel membership class prior to acceptance into membership. Candidates for membership will be given a constitution and asked to read it and affirm that they agree with the doctrine, covenant and vision of the church as a part of the application process. Upon receiving the application, an elder will set up an interview to confirm the individual's intentions and to cover any questions or issues related to their membership. Following the elder interview, all remaining elders will be given an opportunity to affirm the applicant. After the applicant has been affirmed, the elders will remind the candidate of the obligations the candidate has to the church, and the church to candidate. Once these steps are completed, candidates shall be publicly received into membership.

Powers to Vote: Members shall have full voting privileges.

Transfer of Membership: The church shall, at their request, grant any member a letter of resignation or transfer to another church.

Dismissal: If any member is deemed to be negligent in performing the duties of church membership, an elder

will contact the member in an effort towards restoration. If there is no desire for, or progress towards restoration on the part of the member, the elders have cause to vote to officially dismiss him from membership by written note in accordance with Matthew 18.

ARTICLE V

Opening Statement: We, the leadership of Grace Chapel, believe the church to be the family of God, sent by God, for His redemptive mission in the world. We believe that God wants us to give every man, woman, and child, repeated opportunities to see, hear, and be transformed by the gospel, as we live faithful lives of worship. The purpose of the leadership of Grace Chapel will be first and foremost to bring glory to God by advocating the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; bringing people to Him for salvation, and equipping believers to better minister to one another and to those outside the church. The leadership body shall work together with humility and mutual respect, putting aside personal desires for the sake of the gospel, and the Kingdom of God in governing Grace Chapel.

In order to meet these stated ideals, the governing leadership of Grace Chapel shall be divided into these two parts: (1) pastoral staff and (2) elders. The pastoral staff and elders are responsible for providing and safeguarding the spiritual direction of the church.

The trustees are responsible for the financial welfare of the church, and watch over its income, expenditures and properties, and oversee the General Fund. The Ministry Leaders are composed of the heads of the current ministries of the church and provide vision, guidance and accountability for the ministries they oversee. Special committees are formed to meet the special and temporary needs of the church as they arise.

A. Pastoral Staff and Elders

1. Pastoral Staff

- a. **Call:** The pastoral staff shall consist of a lead pastor and other pastors as deemed necessary. In the event of a pastoral vacancy, a pastor shall be called in the manner set forth in Article V.E.1.
- b. **Duties:** The lead pastor shall serve in the church in his discretion subject to Article II in accordance with God's will. He shall be an official member of all boards and committees, and, upon reasonable notice, may call a meeting of the board, committee or membership at any time. He has the freedom to engage whenever necessary in any of the functions of the ministries of the church. The lead pastor or his designee shall be the chairman and moderator of all annual congregational meetings, special meetings called by the pastor, and any other meetings specified by the constitution. The lead pastor shall direct any additional pastors to perform specific duties, to be clarified by the elders in a written job description, and other occasional pastoral duties needed for the smooth operation of the ministry as a whole.
- c. **Tenure:** A pastor's tenure of service shall be indefinite until his death, personal leading of the Lord, or as hereafter provided.
- d. **Dismissal**
 1. **Reasons for Dismissal**
 - a. A pastor may be removed for not effectively performing the functions of his ministry, or if his acts and beliefs are not consistent with the agreements, covenants and rules herein stated.
 2. **Method of Dismissal**
 - a. Using the guidelines of 1 Timothy 5:19-20, any two or more members of this church may present in writing to the elders, charges against the pastor for the above reasons.
 - b. If upon examination of the charges, the elders find them valid, they shall proceed by meeting with the pastor, according to Matthew 18, in an effort to deal with the

issue at hand, and to allow an opportunity for the pastor to resign on his own free will.

- c. If, after the elders have shared the charges, and if the pastor is still in opposition to them, they shall call a meeting of the entire voting membership of the church to hear the charges. If seventy-five percent or more of the voting membership agrees by secret ballot or by absentee ballot, the pastor shall be dismissed as the pastor.

2. Elders

- a. **Call:** The elders shall consist of a minimum of six members with at least four such members being appointed from the congregation. The pastors shall be elders. As the need arises, the elders and pastoral staff will choose new elders on the basis of New Testament qualifications. The position of elder is an ongoing role and the expectation is that they continue to serve unless disqualified, or called by the Lord to step aside. In certain circumstances, the elders can assign, or an elder can request, a time of sabbatical relief from duties for restoration.
- b. **Duties:** The elders and pastors will work together in the spiritual oversight of Grace Chapel providing Biblical direction to the ministry of the church, and lead by means of a Christ-like example and service. They will provide direction and accountability to the Missions Team regarding the use of the Missions Fund. This team is responsible for the distribution of monies in the Fellowship Fund.

Elders need to be available to provide leadership, accountability, and spiritual support to various ministries at any given time.

An elder is responsible to diligently maintain the qualifications of eldership. Failure to do so would initiate a process of restoration and/or dismissal in the manner described in I Timothy 5:19-20.

- c. **Tenure:** Term of service shall be indefinite until removed by death, personal leading of the Lord, or as hereafter provided.
- d. **Dismissal:**
 1. **Reasons for Dismissal**
 - a. Any elder may be removed for not effectively performing the functions of his ministry, or if his acts and beliefs are not consistent with the agreements, covenants and rules herein stated.
 2. **Method of Dismissal**
 - a. Using the guidelines of 1 Timothy 5:19-20, any two or more members of this church may present in writing to the pastor or elders, charges against the elder for the above reasons.
 - b. If upon examination of the charges the elders find them valid, they shall proceed by meeting with the elder in question according to Matthew 18, in an effort to deal with the charges brought against him which may result in discipline up to and including dismissal.

B. Trustees

- a. **Call:** The Trustees shall consist of at least nine members from the congregation. The lead pastor and any additional pastor(s) shall be additional members of the Trustees beyond the number of members set forth in the previous sentence. The Trustees shall appoint from its members a chairperson, a chairperson of Buildings and Grounds, a treasurer, and an assistant treasurer. Each trustee shall have one vote, except the pastor and any additional pastor(s) shall

have only one vote as between them on any matter before the Trustees.

b. Duties

1. The trustees shall be responsible for all financial matters of the church.
2. The trustees, in conjunction with the pastor(s), elders, and ministry leaders, shall develop an annual budget, to be presented to the congregation for a vote no later than the third Sunday in December.
3. The trustees shall be responsible for assigning counters for all offerings collected by the church.
4. The trustees shall have care of the church's real estate; but shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease or transfer any such real estate without consent of the congregation.
5. The treasurer and assistant treasurer are responsible for the financial reporting of the church. They will be responsible for creating whatever committee structure they deem necessary to accomplish this work. They shall provide the trustees with a monthly financial report.
6. The treasurer and assistant treasurer will be responsible for the oversight and accountability of all checks for the church; with exception to the Fellowship Fund, which is under the direct oversight of the elders.
7. Working in conjunction with the trustees, the chairperson of Buildings and Grounds will be responsible for the upkeep, maintenance and repair of the real property of the church including its furniture, fixtures and equipment ("Church Property"). Such person shall be responsible for the care of all matters relating to the Church Property, including, but not limited to the church's lawns, parking lots, sidewalks and surrounding areas.
8. An independent financial examination of the church's finances shall be conducted every two years and presented to the trustees. The trustees will be responsible for selecting qualified financial professionals who are independent of the church.

- c. Tenure:** Upon election by the membership, trustees are to serve a three year term. The election of the trustees shall be in such a manner that no more than three trustees shall be elected in accordance with Article V. F. 1. for a three-year term in any one year. After serving two consecutive terms, a trustee must wait one year to be nominated and serve again. If filling a position created by a resignation, a trustee may be appointed by the board without waiting the one year, and may be nominated the next year for the remainder of the term; but no person can serve as a trustee for more than six consecutive years without waiting one year before being nominated and serving again. The treasurer will be appointed by the trustees from among the duly elected trustees and shall serve for a one-year term, but in no event shall a trustee be appointed treasurer for more than six consecutive one year terms.

d. Dismissal:

1. Reasons for Dismissal

- a. Any trustee may be removed for not effectively performing the functions of his ministry; or if his acts and beliefs are not consistent with the agreements, covenants and rules herein stated.

2. Method of Dismissal

- a. Using the guidelines of 1 Timothy 5:19-20, any two or more members of this church may present in writing to the pastor or elders, charges against the trustee for the above reasons.
- b. If upon examination of the charges, the pastor or elders find them valid, they shall call a meeting with the trustee in question to seek spiritual restoration as well as his resignation from that position. If he is not willing to resign, then the elders will remove him from that position and report to the membership of Grace Chapel the reasons for such removal when appropriate in the discretion of the Elders.

C. Ministry Leaders

- a. **Call:** Ministry leaders can be recommended by pastors, elders, trustees or members of Grace Chapel. The pastors and elders, based upon qualifications in respect to the needs of the specific ministry, will appoint each ministry leader. The ministry leaders shall consist of those people who serve as heads of specific support ministries at Grace Chapel. They shall meet regularly under the supervision of the pastor, with the aid of the pastoral staff and elders, for the purpose of staying connected to the vision, accountability, and coordination of the work of the different ministries along with their appropriate training and support.
- b. **Duty:** The ministries leaders serve to assist and support the vision and mission of the leadership while leading in their specific area of ministry. They are, therefore, accountable to, and supported by the pastors, and elders. Ministry leaders are also accountable to the trustees with regard to honoring their respective ministry budgets for a calendar year. They will follow closely all procedures recommended by the treasurer.
- c. **Tenure:** A ministry leader will serve indefinitely
- d. **Dismissal:** Any Ministry Leader may be removed by the elders or the lead pastor for not effectively performing the functions of such ministry; or if member's acts and beliefs are not consistent with the agreements, covenants and rules herein stated. Upon such removal, the elders may report to the membership of Grace Chapel the reasons for such removal when appropriate in the discretion of the elders.

D. Missions Team

- a. **Call:** Missions Team members can be recommended by pastors, elders, trustees or members of Grace Chapel. The pastors and elders, based upon qualifications in respect to the needs of this specific ministry must approve each individual. The team shall meet regularly under the supervision of the pastor, with the aid of the pastoral staff and elders, for the purpose of staying connected to the vision, accountability, and coordination of the work of the missions ministry.
- b. **Duty:** This team will actively pursue engaging the entire church in God's vision of every man, woman, and child having repeated opportunities to see, hear, and be transformed by the gospel, and will do so in the primary areas of our identified circles of accountability at any given time. This team will run the day-to-day operations of communicating with, and funding our selected partners from the missions' fund, under the accountability and oversight of the elders.
- c. **Tenure:** Members of the Missions Team will serve indefinitely.
- d. **Dismissal:** Any Missions Team member may be removed by the elders or the lead pastor for

not effectively performing the functions of such ministry; or if such member's acts and beliefs are not consistent with the agreements, covenants and rules herein stated. Upon such removal, the elders may report to the membership of Grace Chapel the reasons for such removal when appropriate in the discretion of the elders.

E. Special Committees

Special committees will be formed from time to time, and upon completion of the purpose for which they were formed, will be dissolved.

1. Search Committee

- a. In the event that the lead pastor leaves Grace Chapel, and a suitable replacement cannot be found internally, the elders will seek to fill the position with a qualified and called man of God who is committed to God's vision for the church. The elders can choose to establish a search committee consisting of representatives from the elders, trustees, ministry leaders and members of the congregation. This committee, if called, should consist of no more than twelve members.
- b. An elder will chair this committee.
- c. The Search Committee will review resumes from the candidates, and choose from said candidates those they want to pursue.
- d. This committee will submit a candidate's name for a congregational vote.
- e. A pastor will be elected by a secret ballot of the membership requiring a three-fourths majority vote of the entire voting membership.

2. Constitutional Revision Committee

- a. When either the elders or trustees feel there is a need for the revision of the constitution, a meeting of the two boards will be called to appoint a Constitutional Revision Committee. This committee will be composed of two members of the Board of Trustees, two ministry leaders and six members from the general membership. An elder, who will also serve as the representative from the pastoral staff, will chair the committee.
- b. Amendments or revisions may not be made to the Preamble, Covenant, Articles II and III of this constitution.
- c. Amendments or revisions may be made to the remainder of this constitution in the following manner:

After approval of the proposed amendment by a majority of the elders and trustees, the proposed amendment shall be posted for the general membership at least two Sundays prior to a congregational meeting for the purpose of voting on the proposed amendment or revision to the constitution. A quorum of fifty percent is required for a vote. Upon approval of two thirds majority of those present at the congregational meeting, the proposed amendment shall be incorporated into this constitution.

3. Ad Hoc Committees

When circumstances require it, other temporary committees may be created to meet the needs of the church.

F. Meetings of the Voting Membership of the Church

1. Annual Election of Trustees

The annual election of trustees will take place no later than the third Sunday in March. The pastoral staff and/or their designee shall chair this meeting. The proposed slate of trustees shall be posted for the general membership at least two Sundays prior to a congregational meeting for the purpose electing the Trustees. The quorum will be twenty-five percent of the entire church voting membership. Trustees may be elected by a motion from the floor to vote on the slate of trustees as a whole. In the case of more than one candidate for any one trustee position, the whole election will be by secret ballot. Those elected will be installed in office on the first Sunday of the following April.

2. Annual Congregational Budget Meeting

The annual congregational budget meeting will be held no later than the third Sunday in December. The proposed budget shall be posted for review by the general membership at least two Sundays prior to a congregational meeting for the purpose of approving the annual budget. The quorum will be twenty-five percent of the entire church voting membership. The budget that is properly put before the membership is to be passed or rejected by a simple majority vote of those present. Chairman of the Board of Trustees, or his designee, will chair this meeting.

3. Special Meetings

To address specific issues as they arise, the pastors, elders or trustees may call special meetings of the congregation. Special meetings are to be chaired by a pastor, elder or Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Notice of a special meeting along with its purpose shall be posted for the general membership in accordance with the terms herein or if the purpose for which the special meeting is called is not otherwise addressed, then at least one Sunday prior to the congregational meeting for such specified purpose. To the extent that the special meeting requires a vote of the membership where such voting procedure is not already stated herein, then, in such instance, the quorum shall be twenty-five percent of the entire church voting membership with the item properly put before the membership being voted on to be passed or rejected by a simple majority vote of those present.

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