

CONSTITUTION OF GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH (Revised April 2002)

Preamble

We declare and establish this Constitution to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This Constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual Church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

1.0 Name

This body shall be known as the Grace Baptist Church.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of Grace Baptist Church is to bring glory to God through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, in fulfilling the Great Commandment (Matt. 22:36-40) and the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). Grace Baptist Church seeks to benefit the people of the Greater Hudson and Marlborough, Massachusetts area by providing opportunities to discover God's love and His purpose for their lives.

3.0 Objectives

3.1 Worship

To give honor, reverence, praise and adoration to the one true God with an undivided heart, according to the truth revealed in His word. (John 4:22-24, Matt. 22:37-38, Deut. 6:4-7, Ps. 100, Ex. 34:14)

3.2 Evangelism

To share the Good News of Jesus Christ in a clear and Biblical way, at home, at work, in the community and throughout the world, so that people everywhere may come to a personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (Matt. 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Tim. 2:4)

3.3 Teaching

To promote personal spiritual growth and discipleship through Bible instruction and personal example, helping members develop toward full Christian maturity. (Matt. 28:20, 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:16, Eph. 4:11-12)

3.4 Fellowship

To encourage support and pray for each other as members of the family of God. To share our lives together and openly express our love for Christ. (Acts 2:44-47, Heb. 10:23-25, John 13:34-35, Phil. 2:1-2, James 5:16, 1 Thess. 5:11)

3.5 Service

To serve unselfishly in Jesus' name, meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of those in our Church, the community and the world. (1 Pet. 4:10-11, Matt. 25:34-40, James 2:14-17)

4.0 Statement of Faith

The statement of faith adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1963, as outlined in “The Baptist Faith and Message,” represents in principle the doctrine and confession of faith held by Grace Baptist Church.

4.1 The Bible

The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, was inspired by God to provide an inerrant record of who and what His plan is for salvation through Jesus Christ. It is the only authority for our beliefs and practices.

4.2 God

There is one and only one God, the Creator, Preserver and Ruler of all things, an intelligent, personal and spiritual Being, infinite in all perfections. To Him all people owe their greatest love and obedience.

4.3 The Trinity

God has existed forever as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons yet one Being.

4.4 Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is both divine and human, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. In His earthly life He inaugurated the Kingdom of God, lived a perfect life, and was crucified to bear the penalty of our sins. He physically rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, and is now exalted at the right hand of God, where He intercedes on our behalf. He will return to Earth, where He will judge those who are alive and those who have died.

4.5 The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the spirit of God. He makes people aware of their sin, causes them to be transformed by the new birth, and then gives them the power to live lives of godliness and gives them gifts to perform ministries in the Church.

4.6 Humanity

Man was created without sin, but became corrupted with sin through rebellion against God. All persons are by nature violators of God’s will and are separated from God, in the dominion of Satan, and dead in their sins. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. God created man in His own image, and Christ died for man; therefore every person possesses dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

4.7 Salvation

A person is given a new life, delivered from Satan and made right with God by the work of the Holy Spirit, as a gift of God. This happens as one becomes aware of sin and turns from that sin, putting faith in Jesus Christ and receiving Him as Lord and Savior. The basis of salvation is Christ’s death on our behalf and His resurrection from the dead.

4.8 Prayer

Prayer, including praise, confession, thanksgiving and supplication, is the vital communication between God and His people, indicating total dependency upon God for all spiritual and material well-being. Christians are to pray privately and corporately in the Holy Spirit, to God the Father, and in the name of Jesus Christ.

4.9 Christian Living

Every believer will grow in Christ-like living by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is characterized by increasing love and devotion to God and love for others.

4.10 Eternal Life

Eternal life is God's free gift to all believers. It begins with salvation, is fulfilled in the resurrection from the dead, and continues through eternity.

4.11 Security of Salvation

All true believers will remain faithful to God by the power of the Holy Spirit even though they may sin and destroy their fellowship with God, their effectiveness as Christians, and their peace and joy. If truly born of God they will repent and, through faith, reach the complete goal of their salvation.

4.12 The Church

The local Church is an autonomous body of baptized believers united in fellowship by their common faith and commitment to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. Each member has a vital role in the Church body according to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

4.13 Baptism

Baptism by being immersed in water after accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is a person's public declaration of one's death to sin and resurrection to new life in Jesus Christ. Baptism is a requirement for Church membership.

4.14 The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a memorial service, instituted by Jesus Christ, through which believers remember the sacrificial death of Christ, their complete dependency on Christ, and their union in love with one another in the Body of Christ.

5.0 Grace Baptist Member Church Covenant

Individually and together, the members of Grace Baptist Church enter into the following covenant:

Grace Baptist Church Member Covenant

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and been baptized by immersion, and being in agreement with Grace Baptist Church's confession, purpose and structure, I being led by the Holy Spirit choose to unite with the Grace Baptist Church family. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I will share the responsibility of our church to reach people for Christ...

- ...by praying for its growth to maturity
- ...by inviting the unchurched to attend
- ...by warmly welcoming those who visit

"To the church – We always thank God and pray for you constantly" (1 Thess. 1:1-2)

"The Master said to the servant, Go out into the roads and country lanes, and urge the people there to come so my house will be full" (Luke 14:23)

"So warmly welcome each other into the church just as Christ has warmly welcomed you; then God will be glorified" (Rom. 15:7)

2. I will serve the ministry of the church...

- ...by discovering my gifts and talents
- ...by being equipped by the leaders of our church
- ...by developing a servant's heart

"Serve one another with the particular gifts God has given each of you" (1 Peter 4:10)

"God gave some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up" (Eph. 4:11-12)

"Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who took on the very nature of a servant" (Phil 2:3-4,7)

3. I will support the testimony of our church...

- ...by attending faithfully
- ...by living a godly life
- ...by giving regularly

"Let us not give up meeting together...but let us encourage one another" (Heb. 10:25)

"Whatever happens, make sure that your everyday life is worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27)

"Each one of you, on the first day of each week, should set aside a specific sum of money in proportion to what you have earned and use it for the offering" (1Co. 16:2)

4. I will protect the unity of the church...

- ...by acting in love toward other members
- ...by refusing to gossip
- ...by following the leaders
- ...by handling disagreements in a Scriptural manner

"So let us concentrate on the things which make harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together" (Rom. 14:19)

"Have a sincere love for other believers; love one another earnestly with all your heart" (1 Peter 1:22)

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs" (Eph. 4:29)

"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be no advantage to you" (Heb. 13:17)

"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought" (I Cor. 1:10)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

6.0 Church Government and Affiliation

Under the Lordship of Christ, the government of this Church is vested in the body of believers who compose it. It is subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body, but it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among Southern Baptist churches.

While maintaining its local autonomy, the Church will cooperate with and support the Greater Boston Baptist Association, the Baptist Convention of New England and the Southern Baptist Convention. The Church shall formulate and adopt such By-Laws, Policies, Standing Rules and Strategies as shall be implemented and consistent with the tenets of this Constitution.

7.0 Corporate Status

This body is incorporated as a religious corporation in compliance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The By-Laws shall delineate the criteria for membership in the Church as a corporation and the criteria for eligibility to vote. The By-Laws shall also delineate the offices of the corporation and define the officers' duties.

8.0 Amendments

8.1 Amendment Procedure

This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and eligible to vote at any properly called business meeting, provided that the amendment shall have been offered at a business meeting at least thirty days prior to the time of the vote. There shall be no amendments to Section 4.0, "Statement of Faith," or Section 5.0, "Church Covenant," without approval of ninety percent of the members present and eligible to vote.

8.2 Quorum

Forty percent of the Church membership eligible to vote shall constitute the necessary quorum for voting on amendments to this Constitution.

Revised April 14, 2002