

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF GRACEWAY BAPTIST CHURCH

PREAMBLE

Relying wholly on the Lord Jesus Christ for our salvation, and trusting only in the enabling power of the Holy Spirit for guidance; we, the members of the Graceway Baptist Church of Springfield, Missouri, do ordain and establish the following articles, to which we voluntarily submit ourselves.

ARTICLE I - CHURCH NAME

The church name shall be Graceway Baptist Church. Incorporated on August 27, 1976, Graceway Baptist Church is a general non-profit corporation.

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to win the unsaved to Christ; to build up the saved in the teaching of Scripture through regular preaching services, prayer services, revival meetings, and Bible study; to promote the objectives set forth in the Church Covenant; to give particular emphasis to the fundamentals of the faith in earnestly contending for the faith; and to New Testament methods of personal evangelism; and to extend this same ministry throughout the world by the support of soul-winning missionaries.

ARTICLE III - CHURCH COVENANT

Having been led, as we believe, by the Holy Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our personal Savior; and, upon the profession of our faith having been baptized in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, angels and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another, as one in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, to the expenses of the church and the relief of the poor and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also most solemnly pledge to maintain family and secret devotions; to spiritually train our children; to seek diligently and untiringly the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk righteously in the world, to be just in our dealings; faithful in our engagements; and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale and use of all intoxicating drinks as a beverage, and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the cause of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech. To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation, and mindful of the rules of our Saviour, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage, that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Holy Word.

ARTICLE IV - ARTICLES OF FAITH

- Section 1. **Verbal Inspiration.** We believe the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God in the Old and New Testaments; to be the verbally inspired Word and revelation of God, inerrant, infallible, and God breathed. Psalm 19:7-11; II Tim. 3:16,17; II Peter 1:16-21; Luke 24:13-28; John 16:12-16; Jonah 1:1.
- Section 2. **Deity and Virgin Birth.** We believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, His virgin birth, that He is the incarnate Son of God, the second person in the blessed Trinity, very God of very God, for Whom and by Whom all things were created. John 1:1-14; 14:9; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; John 10:36. Man is not an evolved beast, but a fallen creation. Gen. 1:26, 27; 2:7. He can only be recreated in righteousness in Jesus Christ. II Cor. 5:17; Titus 3:4-5; John 1:12-13.
- Section 3. **The Holy Spirit.** We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person who in His relationship to the unbelieving world, convicts of sin, and righteousness, and judgment; that by His agency all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again and become partakers of the divine nature; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, sanctifies and helps the believer. John 14:16-26; 16:7-11; Romans 8:26-27.
- Section 4. **The Local Church.** We believe that the visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers who have received Jesus Christ as personal Savior. Two ordinances are to be observed by the church: Baptism by immersion and the observance of the Lord's Supper. The only scriptural officers are the bishop (or pastor) and deacons. I Cor. 11:23-26; Acts 8:21-23; I Tim. 3; Titus 1.
- Section 5. **The Trinity.** We believe in the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit - three persons (I John 5:1-8). The Holy Spirit is the infallible interpreter of the infallible Scriptures (John 16:7-15).
- Section 6. **Blood Atonement.** We believe in the substitutionary atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ; that He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man, and that all must be born again or are forever lost. Heb. 2:9; John 6:44-69; 3:1-18; Romans 3:25; Rev. 1-5; Heb. 9:22; I Peter 1:18-19.
- Section 7. **Resurrection.** We believe in the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that He ascended bodily into the heavens, and is at the right hand of God as our Mediator, Priest and Advocate. Acts 3:12-26; John 20; Hebrews 9:24; I Cor. 15:12-28.
- Section 8. **Justification By Faith.** We believe that man is justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Romans 5:1.
- Section 9. **Eternal Security.** We believe in the eternal security of all believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. John 10:27-29.
- Section 10. **Kingship, Second Coming, and Judgment.** We believe in the kingship of Jesus Christ. Rev. 11:15; 19:11-21; I Thess. 1:9,10.
- A. In this blessed hope, the personal, premillennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for those who are fallen asleep in Christ and for His living saints. I Thess. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:50-55; Acts 1:11; Titus 2:13; Luke 21:36.

- B. That He must come with His saints to execute judgment upon the ungodly nations. Jude 14,15; Matt. 25:31-46.
- C. That He will cast the Antichrist and the False Prophet into the lake of fire, and send Satan into the abyss and establish His earthly kingdom and reign for one thousand years. Rev. 19:19-20; 20:1-6.

ARTICLE V - ADMISSION

- Section 1. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a change of heart, and adopting the views of faith and practices held by this church as set forth in this church's Articles of Faith, shall upon baptism by immersion, be received into this membership.
- Section 2. Immersed members from other churches holding the same faith may be received by letter of recommendation from their respective churches.
- Section 3. Those who have once been members of a Baptist church, or of same faith, and in consequence of any peculiar circumstance have no regular letter of membership, must first meet with the pastor and or a deacon giving a satisfactory evidence of a change of heart, Christian conduct, and scriptural faith and baptism.
- Section 4. Previously excluded members of this church may be restored to membership upon public acknowledgment of their sins and errors and upon recommendation of the pastor and deacons.
- Section 5. No person shall be received as a member of this church to whose admission the simple majority of adult members present and voting object.

ARTICLE VI - ACTIVE AND INACTIVE MEMBERS

- Section 1. It is the duty of every member to be personally enlightened to the subject and working of the two membership rolls of this church and their necessity and importance.
- Section 2. It is the duty of every member to be faithful in attendance at all services when it is humanly possible to be so. Any member, who has shown no interest in the church for a period of six (6) months and who, after earnest prayer and contacts by the pastor and deacons continues to show no interest, shall be placed onto the inactive roll upon the recommendation of the pastor and deacons.
- Section 3. A member whose name is transferred from the active church roll to the inactive church roll automatically forfeits their vote in any matter of church business.
- Section 4. Prior to placing a member on inactive status or taking any action affecting their membership status, the affected member shall be notified, in writing, of the action to be taken, and given an opportunity to be heard.
- Section 5. A member whose name has been placed on the inactive church roll may, however, regain his active church roll status any time after having forfeited the same by attending services and upon recommendation by the pastor and deacons.
- Section 6. A member who has surrendered their voting rights by showing no interest for six (6) months and has been placed as a result there of on the inactive church roll, shall remain

on said roll for a period not to exceed five (5) years. At the conclusion of this five (5) year period, they shall be, after a visit by the pastor and a deacon and by church vote, dismissed from the inactive roll and are by this action completely severed from the church.

Section 7. The church may (using scriptural procedures) censure, reprimand, or exclude from membership by recommendation of the pastor and deacons any member who becomes an offense to the church and its good name. Matt. 18:15-17; Rev. 2:2; II John 10,11; Titus 3:10,1; Romans 16:1; II Thess. 3:6-14; I Cor. 5:11-13; Galatians 6:1.

Section 8. The local voting membership of the church shall consist of all persons sixteen (16) years of age or over, born of the Spirit, in good standing, who shall have met membership requirements of the church and subscribed regularly to the support and who names shall appear on the church roster.

A. The Standard of Membership:

1. Born again relationship - John 1:12,13 and John 3:3-8.
2. To fully subscribe to the tenets of faith.
3. Willingness to contribute regularly to the support of the church.

B. Discipline:

1. Any member of the church who shall willfully absent himself or herself or withdraw his or her support, or is out of harmony with the policy of the church, or not willing to follow the spiritual leadership of the pastor automatically becomes a non-active member and shall not be allowed the privilege of having a word in the church business or a vote in any business meeting.
2. Members who join other churches without a letter from this church shall be erased from our membership roll after such statement is made at a meeting for business and a majority vote of those present, authorizing the church clerk to do so and a proper record kept as to why erased.

ARTICLE VII - OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH AND THEIR DUTIES

Section 1. **Pastor.**

- A. The first officer of this church shall be the pastor whose qualifications, duties and leadership responsibilities are found in I Timothy 3:17 and Titus 1:5-9. These and other passages should be studied and used as a guide in the calling of a pastor and deciding the fitness of the current pastor. The pastor shall be called and elected by the church. His term of office shall be indefinite.
- B. It is the duty of the pastor to preach regularly at the church, or in his absence because of ministry elsewhere, to furnish a qualified supply for the pulpit.
- C. The pastor shall act as moderator and chairman of all meetings and or committees of the church unless such meetings are deemed necessary during the serious illness and absence of the pastor.

- D. When it is necessary, by the death, resignation or departure of the pastor, the church shall, without unnecessary delay, proceed to secure a new pastor in the following manner:

Not more than five (5) men who have been members of the church more than six (6) months and who are not related in any manner, shall be known as the "Pulpit Committee". Each must be elected to said office with a simple majority vote by the church. This committee shall invite to this church's pulpit after counsel with the Lord thereon, some minister of good report and whose record reveals without a doubt that he has no dealing with the National Council of churches of Christ in America or any of its subsidiaries. This committee shall call such a minister who is known in his preaching and living to be fundamental in the Word of God and who can and will subscribe in full to the Articles of Faith held by this church. This committee shall only present to the church one candidate at a time. The pulpit committee shall cease to exist immediately after the church, by at least a three quarter (3/4) majority of all active members present, sixteen (16) years old and up; has voted to call any preacher so brought before them by the committee, and who in turn has accepted the said call of the church.

- E. Thirty (30) days notice shall be deemed necessary when either pastor or church desires to sever relationships. Pastor's salary shall continue through the thirty-day period, or until such time as another pastor is called.
- F. Each pastor shall be granted a paid vacation of two weeks per year for the first five (5) years and three (3) weeks per year thereafter. Consideration shall be given by the church in allowing the pastor an additional two (2) weeks for conference attendance.
- G. The Pastor may be removed from his office by a vote of the members, but only at a meeting called especially for such purpose by not less than 50 per-cent of the members and only upon action of not less than 75 per-cent of the total membership by secret ballot cast at such meeting.
- H. The Pastor will have the power to employ and dismiss his associates, including the office of song leader. This power will apply to the position only, and will not apply to any salary paid.

Section 2. **Deacons.**

At the annual meeting of the church, deacon(s) shall be elected by a majority of votes, for a three (3) year term. A deacon will not be eligible to serve another term until one (1) year has passed following the end of his term. It is recognized that the scriptures place the emphasis upon the spiritual qualifications of those elected as deacons (1 Timothy 3:8-12; Acts 6:27); this includes no smoking, and that such selection is to result in the building up of the church numerically, spiritually, and financially. They shall likewise prepare and distribute the elements of the Lord's Supper.

Section 3. **Trustees.**

- A. At the annual meeting of the church, trustees shall be elected by a majority of votes, for a three (3) year term. A trustee will not be eligible to serve another term until one (1) year has passed following the end of his term. The church shall have a minimum of five (5) trustees. A trustee shall in this church be a male member known as a "person who is elected or appointed to hold the property, to take care of it, and to cherish the same for the benefit of those entitled to it."

- B. The duties of the trustees are:
1. The trustees, deacons and treasurer(s) shall be the Finance Committee.
 2. The trustees are to have a representative present at the counting of all monies.
 3. They shall transact all business and sign all papers dealing with real property when the church has so ordered by a majority of votes. They shall have no authority to buy, sell or otherwise transact business concerning this church's real property without the aforementioned majority vote of the church in a constitutionally called business meeting.
 4. They shall be responsible for the care and upkeep of the church property.

Section 4. **General Treasurer.**

- A. At the annual meeting of the church there shall be elected for a one year term by the majority vote of the church, a general treasurer whose duties shall be to receive and count all monies. The treasurer shall pay all orders drawn on him by order of the church, or by the pastor, or pastor and directors provided such drawing by the pastor, or pastor and directors is for the work of this church, and does not include the buying or selling of real estate. He shall keep a true and fair book of accounts, and monthly shall lay before the church a statement of monies so received and paid.
1. The Distribution of Money.
 - (a.) The pastor may approve use up to \$75.00 for the needs of the church.
 - (b.) Any amount above \$75.00 up to \$1000.00 is to be approved by the Finance Committee.
 - (c.) Any amount above \$1000.00 is to be approved at a business meeting of the church.
 - (d.) Two signatures shall be required on all checks drawn by the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be authorized to sign all checks and any other member may be authorized to sign except the Pastor.

Section 5. **Clerk.**

At the annual meeting of the church, a clerk shall be elected by majority vote, for a one (1) year term whose duties shall be to keep a record on all the legitimate business of the church, have charge of all such records pertaining to this office and keep a register of all the members of this church in two divisions that shall always be known as the Active Roll and the Inactive Roll and shall always be responsible to make proper entries in each roll as the individual member so merits as recorded in Article VI.

Section 6. **Head Usher.**

At the annual meeting of the church, a Head Usher shall be elected by the majority of the church for a one (1) year term and he shall be responsible for the selecting of his assistants.

Section 7. **Officers and Teachers Qualifications.**

- A. No member of this church may be elected to an office until after six (6) months membership.
- B. No member may teach any class until they have sufficiently proven themselves capable unto the leadership of the church, and agree to the Teachers Standards set forth by the church.
- C. Graceway Baptist Church Sunday School Teacher Standards.
 - 1. I understand my appointment is by the Pastor and is for an indefinite period of time.
 - 2. I fully believe the doctrines and positions of Graceway Baptist church as set forth in the Word of God.
 - 3. I purpose, by the grace of God, to keep my life clean according to the standards of God's Word. Any sin, doubtful conduct or wrong conversation, shall be put out of my life so that my influence as well as my teaching will be helpful to the pupils of my class. I will not drink alcoholic drinks or use any form of tobacco. I will practice the New Testament example of tithing.
 - 4. I purpose to be present every Sunday. If it is necessary to be absent, I shall notify the Pastor or Sunday School Director as early in the week as possible.
 - 5. I purpose to attend as many of the services of the Church as possible and use all my influence to secure the attendance of my pupils.
 - 6. I purpose to make preparation by careful study of the lesson for each Sunday.
 - 7. I purpose to attend every regularly called Teacher's Meeting.
 - 8. I shall aim to lead each unsaved pupil to Christ and help all those who are saved "to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 9. By every possible means such as personal support of the visitation program, telephone and correspondence I shall seek to keep in touch with my pupils and contact prospects.
 - 10. I shall endeavor, by dependence upon the Holy Spirit, to be faithful to my task as a servant of the Lord. I purpose to pray regularly for my class, and the work of the entire church.

Earnestly seeking that God, my guide, bless and use me in the position of a teacher, I subscribe to the above standards, trusting in His grace for their fulfillment in my life. (To be signed by each teacher.)

ARTICLE VIII - CHURCH MEETINGS

Section 1. **Procedure.**

- A. The annual business meeting shall be held the second Sunday in February. The annual election of officers shall be at this meeting.
- B. Every business meeting shall be announced at two (2) of the Church's regular Sunday morning and evening services, prior to the time of the business meeting.

- C. Every business meeting shall be opened and closed by prayer.
- D. No second motion shall be entertained until the one under consideration has been disposed of, except a motion of amendment or adjournment.
- E. Any speaker who introduces any matter foreign to the subject under discussion shall be ruled out of order.
- F. Discourteous language or remarks adapted to injure the reputation or feelings of any member as determined by the Moderator, shall be ruled out of order, and shall forfeit the speaker's right to the floor.
- G. The Moderator may speak upon any subject under discussion.
- H. Every active member wishing to speak shall rise and address the Moderator.
- I. Every proposition presented for action of the church must be introduced by motion of one member and seconded by another.
- J. No member shall speak more than twice upon the same subject.
- K. All questions shall be decided by majority of members in attendance and in good standing with the church.
- L. Regular business meetings shall be held at such times as are necessary but not less frequently than quarterly throughout the year.

- M. The church officers and pastor shall be allowed discretion to act on matters of an urgent, but non-critical nature, and bring about a proper resolution.
- N. Emergency business meetings may be scheduled by church officers in times of need. Announcements shall be made on regular Wednesday or Sunday services to convene at the next regular service, or church officers shall contact members by phone at least two (2) days in advance of the meeting.

ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS

None of the articles of this church may be altered without a three-quarter (3/4) majority vote to make such amendments. There shall never be an amendment to the Articles of Faith.

ARTICLE X - THE HOLY BIBLE

The King James version of 1611 shall be the only textbook used in this church or Sunday school. The church does not authorize or recommend the Living Bible or Good News for Modern Man.