

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

Statesville, North Carolina

COVENANT

(Changes Adopted November 8, 2015)

PREAMBLE

For the purpose of affirming, preserving, and making secure the principles and liberties of our faith and to the end that this body be governed in an orderly manner, in cooperation with bodies approved by the congregation, we do declare and establish this covenant.

ARTICLE I - NAME

This body shall be known as Grace Baptist Church of Statesville, North Carolina, Inc. (Grace)

ARTICLE II – OUR MISSION

We are Grace – a ministering people of God, reaching beyond our walls to the needs of our local and global community. We are an intergenerational faith community called and committed to a life of love and servanthood through the experience of celebrative worship, the development of each person's gifts and the work for peace and justice.

In our diversity we find strength and a way to understand the inclusiveness of God. We recognize each individual as a child of God. We welcome and affirm ALL people, who and where you are, to join in our common mission through participation and leadership in this community of faith.

ARTICLE III – COVENANT PARTICIPANTS

Grace is made up of a group of people who are seeking to join together as we meet God wherever God is in the world. We believe that is best accomplished when we are in a committed relationship with our community of faith. We call this relationship being a Covenant Participant.

The official structure of Grace is designed around Covenant Participants. The Covenant Participants make the decisions of our community of faith, set our agenda, and are ultimately responsible for Grace. Since participating in our community is expected, we try to make the process of being a Covenant Participant straightforward and simple.

Being a Covenant Participant is open to all and is a self-defined designation. A Covenant Participant is called to join in the life of Grace with their time, money, effort and dreams. While we hope that all Covenant Participants participate fully in our community there is no mandate of participation or behavior.

Once a person has made the decision to become a Grace Covenant Participant, they contact the Pastor with their intention to become a Covenant Participant of the Grace community of faith. The Pastor will contact the Welcome Committee who will meet with them. They will then introduce and present the new Covenant Participant to the Grace community as having made this commitment.

All current Grace members will automatically become Grace Covenant Participants upon the adoption of this article.

ARTICLE IV - CHURCH GOVERNMENT

SECTION 1 - The government of Grace shall be congregational in nature and shall be vested in the Covenant Participants.

SECTION 2 - Grace Conference shall be held at least bimonthly. The conference is open to all who wish to attend and all Covenant Participants are eligible to vote. Each board shall be represented at conference to report its work and make recommendations.

SECTION 3 - All major recommendations coming before the congregation for vote at Grace Conference must be submitted in written form to the congregation at least two weeks prior to the conference.

SECTION 4 - Covenant Participants unable to be present for the vote are to contact their assigned deacon in advance to arrange for an absentee ballot.

SECTION 5 - A majority vote carries in all matters unless otherwise stated in this covenant.

SECTION 6 - All business shall be conducted in Grace Conference according to Robert's Rules of Order.

ARTICLE V - PASTOR(S)

SECTION 1 - The pastoral search committee shall be nominated by the Cabinet and approved by the Covenant Participants. Its mission shall be to seek out and nominate as pastor(s) a minister(s) of the gospel with Christian character and qualifications to fit him/her to be pastor(s) of Grace. The committee shall bring only one recommendation at a time for the consideration and no nominations shall be made except by the committee. Election shall take place at a conference especially set for that purpose no sooner than one week after the nominee has been introduced to the Covenant Participants. The Covenant Participants shall be given at least one week's notice of that conference. Voting shall be by written ballot and the Cabinet shall act as tellers. An affirmative vote of 75% shall be necessary for an extension of a call. Should the recommendation by the committee fail to receive the 75% vote, the committee will be instructed to seek another pastor.

SECTION 2 - The person(s) assuming the role and responsibility of pastor(s) shall possess and exercise such gifts that enable him/her to fulfill the scriptural admonition to be "pastor and teacher, equipping the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..." (Ephesians 4: 11-12). The New Testament pattern of a balance between prophetic endeavors and pastoral care is vital to this equipping ministry.

SECTION 3 The pastor(s) shall be charged with the responsibility of the congregation's well-being through:

- a. **Proclamation**-The pastor(s) shall proclaim the gospel through occasions of preaching and teaching during the regularly scheduled services and on special occasions. This will involve preparation of and leadership in worship services, retreats, special classes, Bible studies, and other activities which will enrich the life of Grace. The pastor(s) shall work with others to accomplish this end. The pastor(s) shall have special charge of the pulpit ministry and shall, in cooperation with the deacons, provide for a pulpit supply when absent. The pastor(s) shall oversee the administration of the ordinances.
- b. - **Personal contact**-The pastor(s) shall make regular contact with Grace families and others who express interest in Grace. This includes visits to those who are ill, shut-in, bereaved, or in crisis. Ongoing absenteeism in worship will be considered a crisis event. Pastoral counseling, in whatever setting, is considered a pastoral contact.
- c. - **Congregational Participation** - The pastor(s) shall participate in the lives of the members of the congregation, and shall share, as requested, in their times of crisis and/or joy through the ministry of funeral services, weddings, and other momentous events in the human pilgrimage.
- d. - **Community Involvement**- The pastor(s) shall both participate in and lead the congregation to be involved in issues of need and concern in the larger community. The pastor(s) will foster ecumenical relationships, both locally and through connections with the worldwide Christian community.
- e. - **Administration**- The pastor(s) shall be accountable to the Personnel Committee. The activities and work of Grace employees and staff shall be under the pastor(s) direction. The pastor(s) shall be ex-officio member of all boards and committees. Through shared leadership, the pastor(s) shall consistently work toward a goal of a congregation that is well-organized and functioning.

ARTICLE VI ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND POLICIES

SECTION 1 - THE CABINET will be composed of the chairs of the Deacon, Stewardship, Mission, Worship, and Education boards; the elected chair of the Cabinet, and the Clerk. The elected chair of the Cabinet and the Clerk shall each serve for two years, shall not be the chair of any other board, and shall not serve as any other church officer.

- a. - The Cabinet shall be the nominating committee for the officers, Deacon, Stewardship, Mission, Worship and Education Boards, Personnel Committee, the Pastoral Search Committee (as needed), all committees including standing committees (flower, ordinance, etc.) and chair of the Cabinet. Nominees will be elected by Covenant Participant vote. The term for committee members shall be determined by the Cabinet. The Cabinet shall be responsible for filling any vacancies in these offices, boards or committees.
- b. - The Cabinet shall coordinate the work of all officers and boards and shall determine and direct the relationship between officers, boards, standing committees and temporary committees.
- c. - The Cabinet shall coordinate the Grace calendar.
- d. - The Cabinet will oversee a personnel committee which will be composed of four members. Duties of the personnel committee will include:

1. Securing and recommending with approval of the congregation any staff as the need arises. In this process appropriate staff members will be consulted before any recommendation is made.
2. Overseeing pastor(s) and staff and being responsible for all employment related issues.
3. Setting personnel policies which will be approved by the Cabinet. Serving as a liaison group for the pastor(s) and other staff of Grace.

SECTION 2 - OFFICERS

- a. - A Cabinet Chair shall be elected by the Covenant Participants. It shall be the Cabinet Chair's duty to moderate all regular and called conferences. The Cabinet Chair shall appoint a substitute in the event of their absence at a conference.
- b. - A clerk shall be elected by the Covenant Participants and serve a two year term. It shall be the duty of the clerk to maintain Grace records and to attend, or be represented at, all business meetings and at all Cabinet meetings in order to keep minutes of the proceedings.
- c. - A treasurer shall be elected annually by the Covenant Participants. It shall be the duty of the treasurer to insure disbursement by check upon proper authority all funds given to Grace, insure maintenance of an itemized account of all receipts and disbursements, and to insure preparation of a monthly account to the Covenant Participants. The treasurer's books shall be reviewed as arranged by the Stewardship Board and all books, records, and accounts shall be considered the property of Grace. The treasurer shall be an ex officio member of the Stewardship Board if not an elected member. The treasurer may not be chair of the Stewardship Board.
- d. - A financial secretary shall be elected by the Covenant Participants annually. It shall be the duty of the financial secretary to receive and accurately record the contributions to Grace and at least annually provide a statement to each contributor. The financial secretary shall assist the treasurer and Stewardship Board in preparing a monthly statement for the Covenant Participants. The financial secretary shall be an ex officio member of the Stewardship Board if not an elected member. The financial secretary may not be chair of the Stewardship Board.

SECTION 3 - DIRECTORS - Grace shall have three Directors. The Stewardship Board will nominate directors for election by the Covenant Participants. Directors will hold Grace property in trust. It shall be the function of the directors to affix their signatures to legal documents involving the sale, mortgage, purchase, or rental of property or other legal documents where signatures of directors are required. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without a specific vote (requiring an affirmative vote of 75%) of the Covenant Participants authorizing each action.

SECTION 4 - BOARDS

There shall be five boards composed of Deacon, Stewardship, Education, Worship and Mission. Each board shall consist of a minimum of four members except the Deacon Board which shall have a minimum of six members. Each board will elect its own chair annually.

- a. **DEACON BOARD** - This board will serve the people of Grace by interacting with families, advising and assisting the pastoral staff, and leading the community of faith to be servants to the local and global community.

1. It will encourage a community of compassion, listening and responding to those in need without judgment, accepting people as they are.
2. It will offer caring and companionship, expressing empathy and respect rather than solutions or cures.
3. It will serve as a conduit for covenant participants, providing information about programs and others in the community of faith with calls, visits and other contacts.
4. It will help connect covenant participants with opportunities to use their gifts in ways that build relationships and further the ministries of Grace.
5. It will serve with the assurance that confidences must be private and that relationships of caring are built on a foundation of trust.

b. EDUCATION BOARD-This board will be responsible for all phases of religious education.

1. It shall plan, administrate, and coordinate all phases of the education and training of Grace. It will work with the music staff and others to provide music ministry to Grace.
2. It shall coordinate the ordering of all educational materials and receive requests for other teaching supplies and aids. It will screen all purchase requests for and oversee the use and management of any church-owned educational equipment.
3. It shall nominate persons for each volunteer leadership position in the education and music programs with final approval from the congregation.
4. It shall research the field of religious education and provide recommendations for improvement in any phase of the educational ministry.
5. It shall seek excellence in providing Grace with a meaningful program of education by periodically sponsoring clinics to help the educational leadership.

c. STEWARDSHIP BOARD-This board will be responsible for guiding Grace into the most effective utilization of all its properties-material, financial, and real estate.

1. It shall study the total use of Grace properties and finances and make recommendations to utilize all Grace physical resources to the fullest in promoting education, worship, and ministries.
2. It shall review the financial resources Grace and prepare for recommendation to the Covenant Participants an annual budget in keeping with the Grace's vision of itself as first and foremost a ministering congregation. It shall confer with the other boards who will submit their annual budget needs.
3. It shall arrange the review of the financial records annually.

4. It shall study the condition, state of repair, and appearance of the buildings and grounds, and make arrangements for necessary repairs and improvements. Any such repairs or improvements in excess of 2% of the total annual budget must be approved by the Covenant Participants in conference.
 5. It shall supervise the acquisition of any new properties purchased by Grace.
- d. MISSION BOARD-**This board shall promote the concept that every covenant participant is a minister by encouraging a high level of congregational participation and uses of resources, both human and monetary.
1. It shall be a vehicle to communicate specific areas of human needs to the congregation and will coordinate and assist in implementing projects to address these needs.
 2. It shall strive to investigate and promote new opportunities to serve others both locally and globally constantly increasing social awareness and ministry.
 3. It shall coordinate cooperative ministries with other likeminded groups to promote kinship and more effectively minister to community and world needs.
 4. It shall foster relationships between the congregation and the local community and seek creative ways to involve others in the life of Grace.
- e. WORSHIP BOARD-**This board shall promote meaningful worship among the Grace community by helping the congregation fully realize the movement of God's spirit in worship. Whether in a regularly scheduled service or other setting, worship is seen as a reflection of the spiritual life of the congregation.
1. It shall work in partnership with the pastor(s), other boards, committees, and groups to utilize worship to emphasize special projects, days, or events. It shall also provide suggestions, ideas, and leadership for enhancing regular worship services.
 2. It shall develop special worship experiences for seasonal celebrations and other significant celebrations that occur in the life of Grace.
 3. It shall employ many different tools and practices including but not limited to drama, music, poetry, liturgical dance, dramatic readings and meals.
 4. It shall review and study the worship format and the desires of the congregation through surveys, one to one discussions, and experimentation.

ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS

The Covenant may be amended, altered, or repealed with an affirmative vote of 75%.

The proposed amendment, alteration, or repeal shall have been presented to Grace Covenant Participants in written form at least two weeks prior to the time of voting.

Notice of the conference in which a vote to amend, alter, or repeal the Covenant is to be taken shall be given at least two weeks prior to the time of the conference.