

# **Constitution for Grace Baptist Church of Salado**

## **Article 1 - Name and Status**

The name of this church is Grace Baptist Church of Salado. This church will be further referred to herein as “the Church” and also may be referred to here and may do business as “Grace Baptist,” “Grace Church Salado,” or “Grace Salado.”

The Church is a non-profit religious corporation under the laws of the state of Texas and is organized under the Texas Business Organization Code. Federal tax exemption is granted under Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3).

## **Article 2 - Mission, Purpose, and Values**

The Church exists to exalt God as a gospel-centered community of biblical faith, eternal hope, and radical love. We do this by cultivating a community where people encounter God, are equipped with truth, and learn to engage the world. *(Matthew 13:44-46; 28:18-20 / Mark 12:28-34 / Acts 1:8; 2:36-47 / Colossians 1:3-2:10)*

We value a celebration of God’s supreme and absolute sovereignty over all of creation, a consistent conformity of all of life to biblical truth, and a commitment to spreading the gospel to all peoples. *(Colossians 1:3-2:10)*

## **Article 3 - Doctrine**

The Church affirms the Apostles Creed, the New Hampshire Confession of Faith (1853), and the Baptist Faith and Message (2000) as symbols of our belief in historic Christianity, evangelicalism, believer’s baptism, and congregational polity. Furthermore, our Statement of Faith (see Appendix I) summarizes these creeds and confessions while stating essential beliefs of the Church in a manner accessible to all.

## **Article 4 - Membership**

### *Section 1 - Qualifications of Members*

Those seeking membership in the Church must believe in Jesus Christ, give evidence of regeneration, have been baptized as a believer following regeneration, and wholeheartedly believe in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Member candidates must agree to submit to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant (see Appendix II). The elders shall be responsible for determining an individual’s qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person’s profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

### *Section 2 - Admission of Members*

Candidates for membership shall present themselves to the elders for evaluation and recommendation. Elders shall recommend qualified candidates to the members for acceptance by voice during any regular or special meeting of members. At that point, candidates shall relinquish their membership in any other church(es).

### *Section 3 - Duties and Privileges of Members*

Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the Church in a manner consistent with God’s leading as well as the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Each member shall regularly gather with the Church for worship, serve within the Church, and attend members’ meetings to vote on the election of officers, decisions regarding membership status, and other such matters as may be

submitted to a vote. Only those individuals who are members may serve in leadership positions in the Church. All other attendees of the Church may serve on an ad-hoc basis with elder approval but may not participate in any vote.

#### *Section 4 - Discipline*

All members of the body of Christ have an individual responsibility to live righteously and to encourage righteous behavior in other believers. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored (such as false teaching, apostasy, divisiveness, and immorality) shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the Church, according to the instructions found in the New Testament and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, suspension from communion for a definite period, deposition from office, and excommunication. Such action may only be undertaken at the recommendation of the elders and upon a vote of at least two-thirds of members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined, for instruction in righteousness, for the sake of our witness, and for the purity of the Church as a whole. Redemption rather than punishment should be the guideline, which governs the attitude of one member toward another

#### *Section 5 - Termination*

The church shall recognize the termination of an individual's membership following his or her death or after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline as described above. Additionally, the Church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with church discipline or for any other biblical reason.

### **Article 5 - Polity**

The government of the Church is vested solely in the members who compose it. It shall be subject to the control of no other ecclesiastical body but shall recognize and sustain the right of mutual fellowship which is common among churches of like faith. Its offices are those of elder and deacon (*Acts 6:1-7 / 1 Timothy 3:1-7*).

#### *Section 1 - Elders*

The elders shall be comprised of not less than three men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in the New Testament. Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the Church. They shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word, and shepherding the flock of God entrusted to them. (*Acts 6:1-7 / 1 Timothy 3:1-7*)

Elders shall be elected in accordance with the constitutional provision on elections and shall be set apart as elders. Each elder shall be reaffirmed by the Church every two years. After an elder, other than a staff-elder, has served three consecutive two year terms, he cannot be re-appointed as elder for a period of two years. An elder's term in office may be terminated by resignation or dismissal. Dismissal shall only be undertaken following the expressed concern of at least two members not married to one another who are in good standing before the other elders or, if necessary, the congregation at any regular or special meeting of the members. Any elder may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of members at any such members meeting.

Elders shall at all times take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, oversee the licensing and ordination of ministerial candidates, conduct worship services, oversee the administration of the ordinances of believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee

the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the Church, and mobilize the Church for world missions. The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions and beliefs. The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. Elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. Members shall approve all candidates to fill pastoral positions.

Each year, the elders (after consultation with staff members, deacons, and members) shall present the Church an itemized budget for consideration of the members at a specially-called budget meeting. They shall call for a vote on the budget at the following regular or special meeting of the members. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the Church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders.

The elders, shall serve as directors of the corporation as required by Texas Code. The elders shall have the authority to sign documents on behalf of the Church. They shall have no power to buy, sell, mortgage, lease, or transfer any property without specific vote of the members authorizing each action.

The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings.

No elder shall hold the office of deacon during their tenure.

### *Section 2 - Deacons*

The office of deacon is described in the New Testament (*Acts 6:1-7 / 1 Timothy 3:1-7*). The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, those who are giving of themselves in service to the Church and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to the Church and be set apart as deacons. They shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year. Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. Deacons shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, report on its use to the elders at their request, and report to the Church its total receipts and total disbursements only. The deacons, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the Church.

No deacon shall hold the office of elder during their tenure.

### *Section 3 - Pastor of Preaching and Vision*

The Pastor of Preaching and Vision shall be an elder and shall perform the duties and meet the qualifications of an elder in Section 1 above. He shall be recognized by the Church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the bi-annual reaffirmation or to the term limits established in Section 1 above.

He shall preach, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in his job description (see Appendix III). In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated

### *Section 4 - Other Pastors*

The Church may call additional men as pastors as deemed necessary by the elders. These pastors shall assist the Pastor of Preaching and Vision his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor or as set forth in their job descriptions (see Appendix III), and their employment will be at-will under the oversight of the elders. They shall be recognized by the Church as particularly gifted and called to vocational ministry

and shall not be subject to the bi-annual reaffirmation or to the term limits established in Section 1 above. While not automatically appointed as elders, these pastors may be elected as elders per the processes outlined in Article 7.

#### *Section 5 - Other Staff Members*

The pastors may hire additional staff to assist with the ministry of the Church, following the oversight and approval of the elders. These staff members shall not be pastors. Their duties shall be set forth in their job descriptions (see Appendix III), and their employment will be at-will under the oversight of the pastors and elders. They shall not be subject to the bi-annual reaffirmation or to the term limits established in Section 1 above.

#### *Section 6 - Clerk*

The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve a term of one year, subject to reappointment. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint a member to perform the duties of the clerk. These duties include the responsibility to record minutes of all regular and special members meetings, to preserve an accurate roll of the membership, and to render reports to the Church as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or members. The church clerk shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent revision of this constitution and its appendices shall be available for all church members.

#### *Section 7 - Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer*

The treasurer and assistant treasurer, who shall not be active elders, deacons, or paid church staff members, shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation to serve one year terms, subject to reappointment. The treasurer and assistant treasurer may not be related by birth or marriage. The treasurer, with the help of the assistant treasurer, shall ensure that all funds and securities of the Church are properly secured in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer, with the help of the assistant treasurer, shall also ensure that full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements are kept in books belonging to the Church, and that adequate controls are implemented to guarantee that all funds belonging to the Church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the Church. The treasurer shall render to the elders annually, or whenever they may require it, an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the Church. The treasurer shall also be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues and expenses of the Church at each members' meeting. This reporting responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders.

#### *Section 8 - Committees and Teams*

The elders shall establish one standing Finance Committee to oversee the financial policies and procedures of the Church. The members of this Finance Committee shall be members in good standing of the Church and shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation. The Treasurer shall be an ex-officio member on this Committee. The committee members shall be elected to one term lasting for a maximum of three years and may only be elected to another term after one year.

Additional ad-hoc teams may be established by the recommendation of the elders and shall function under the oversight of the elders to assist in the administrative work of the Church. These teams shall execute their duties as outlined by the elders, refer any recommendations to the elders for presentation to the Church, not enact any policy or decision without approval of the members, and be disbanded by the elders when their work is complete.

### **Article 6 - Meetings**

#### *Section 1 - Worship Meetings*

Worship services shall be held each Sunday. Additional services may be held throughout the week as the Church deems necessary.

## *Section 2 - Members' Meetings*

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least once a quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership. This regular meeting shall be announced at all public services of the Church within two weeks preceding the meeting. An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all member meetings. The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the Church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the Church by the responsible members. Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year (April to March). Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level. If at any time a financial need comes before the church that would exceed 5% of the annual budget or draw the cash reserves below three months operating expenses, the elders shall present that need to the members for a vote at a regular or special members' meeting.

Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the Church within two weeks preceding the meeting. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

At any members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

In every members' meeting, a motion (other than those related to elections outlined in Article 7) will carry with a simple majority vote in the affirmative.

In every members' meeting, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **Article 7 - Elections**

### *Section 1 - Principles*

Substantial prayer, both individual and corporate, shall be an integral part of the election process. Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders. All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members. The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of Christ.

### *Section 2 - Selection of Officers*

The election of officers (elder and deacon), pastors, clerk, treasurer, assistant treasurer, and committee members shall be held at a member meeting of the Church and shall proceed as directed by the moderator. Names of nominees for these positions shall be presented by the elders at a previous regularly scheduled or special member meeting (providing the meeting occurred at least two weeks prior).

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern, in written form, to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church member meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a 75% majority of all votes cast for the office of elder and pastor. For all other offices and positions, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast. Abstentions will not be considered as votes. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been designated prior to election.

## **Article 8 - Indemnification**

### *Section 1 - Mandatory Indemnification*

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the Church, the Church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the Church, and (d) the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

### *Section 2 - Permissive Indemnification*

At the discretion of the elders, the Church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the Church's best interest and not unlawful.

### *Section 3 - Permission*

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

## **Article 9 - Dispute Resolution**

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Church, the Church shall require its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the Church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the Church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities. (*Matthew 18:10-35 / Luke 17:3 / Romans 12:18 / Colossians 3:13*)

## **Article 10 - Amendments**

The Statement of Faith and Church Covenant may be amended by a three-quarters vote of the members present and voting at a member meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous member meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a member meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous member meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members by the Church clerk.

## Appendix I

### Statement of Faith

#### *The Scriptures*

The Scriptures, comprised of 39 Old Testament books and 27 New Testament books, were given by the inspiration of God as a revelation of himself to mankind, and are the only sufficient, infallible, and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience. The Scriptures lead us to salvation by faith alone in Jesus Christ. They are both fully and verbally inspired by God and free of error. Their words must not be added to, superseded, or changed. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology, must be tested by them. (*Psalm 19:7-11 / Matthew 5:18 / John 10:35; 17:17 / 2 Timothy 3:16-17 / 2 Peter 1:20-21*)

#### *The Triune God*

There is one God, infinite, eternal, almighty and perfect in holiness, truth and love. Having in himself all perfections and being infinite in them all, creatures owe him the highest love, reverence, and obedience. In the unity of the Godhead, there are three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), each with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being. These persons are co-existent, co-equal, and co-eternal. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the Father. Yet each is truly God. One God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—is the foundation of Christian faith and life. (*Isaiah 40:1-48:22 / Psalm 104:1-35; 139:1-24 / Matthew 10:29-31; 28:19 / Acts 17:24-28 / 2 Corinthians 13:14 / Ephesians 1:9-12; 4:4-6 / Colossians 1:16-17 / Hebrews 1:1-3 / Revelation 1:4-6*)

#### *The Father*

God the Father is the Creator of heaven and earth. By His word and for His glory, He freely and supernaturally created the world out of nothing. Through the same word, He daily sustains all creation. He rules over all and, together with the Son and the Spirit, is the only Sovereign. His plans and purposes cannot be thwarted. He is faithful to every promise, works all things together for good to those who love Him and, in His unfathomable grace, gave His Son, Jesus Christ, for mankind's redemption. He made all things for the praise of His glory and intends for man, in particular, to live in fellowship with Himself. (*Genesis 1:1; 2:7 / Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff; 20:1ff / Leviticus 22:2 / Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6 / 1 Chronicles 29:10 / Psalm 19:1-3 / Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8 / Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13 / Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19 / Mark 1:9-11 / John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8 / Acts 1:7 / Romans 8:14-15 / 1 Corinthians 8:6 / Galatians 4:6 / Ephesians 4:6 / Colossians 1:15 / 1 Timothy 1:17 / Hebrews 11:6; 12:9 / 1 Peter 1:17 / 1 John 5:7*)

#### *The Son*

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is the eternal Word made Flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He is fully God and fully man. Through Him, all things came into being and were created. He was before all things, and in Him, all things hold together by the word of His power. He is perfect in nature, teaching and obedience and is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on the cross. By His death in our place, He revealed divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Redeeming us from sin, He rose bodily from the grave on the third day, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and performing many convincing proofs of His resurrection. He ascended into heaven where, at God's right hand, He intercedes for His people and rules as Lord over all, awaiting His return. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served and obeyed by all. (*Genesis 18:1ff. / Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff. / Isaiah 7:14; 53:1-12 / Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19 / Mark 1:1; 3:11 / Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46 / John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28 / Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20 / Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4 / 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28 / 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9 / Galatians 4:4-5 / Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10 / Philippians 2:5-11 / Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9 / 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 / 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16 / Titus 2:13-14 / Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8 / 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22 / 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9 / 2 John 7-9 / Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16*)

### *The Holy Spirit*

The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. Through the proclamation of the gospel, He persuades men to repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord. By the same Spirit, a person is led to trust in divine mercy. The Holy Spirit unites believers to Jesus Christ in faith, brings about the new birth and dwells within the regenerate. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify the Son who, in turn, came to glorify the Father. He will lead the Church into a right understanding and rich application of the truth of God's Word. He is to be respected, honored and worshiped as God, the Third Person of the Trinity. (*Genesis 1:2 / Judges 14:6 / Job 26:13 / Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff. / Isaiah 61:1-3 / Joel 2:28-32 / Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19 / Mark 1:10,12 / Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49 / John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14 / Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6 / Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27 / 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13 / Galatians 4:6 / Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18 / 1 Thessalonians 5:19 / 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1 / 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16 / Hebrews 9:8,14 / 2 Peter 1:21 / 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7 / Revelation 1:10; 22:17*)

### *Man*

God created man—male and female—in his own image and free from sin, that man might glorify him in perfect fellowship. But through temptation, man rebelled against God in sin and fell from his original holiness and righteousness. Man became subject to divine wrath, wholly depraved, and utterly inescapable of returning to God. Every part of man's mind, will, and affections is affected by this depravity and sin. Without divine help, man and his posterity is without hope. (*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6 / Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5 / Isaiah 6:5 / Jeremiah 17:5 / Matthew 16:26 / Acts 17:26-31 / Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29 / 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22 / Ephesians 2:1-22 / Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11*)

### *The Gospel*

The gospel is the good news of God's grace to redeem man from his sin. By the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ, the only divinely-appointed mediator and the only begotten Son of God, the triune God saved those who are his. He satisfied the demands of justice, appeased divine wrath, displayed his mysterious love, and revealed his divine grace by the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. There is no other name, other than that of Jesus Christ, by which man can be saved. At the heart of our faith is the finished work of Jesus Christ to secure our redemption. Therefore, every part of our lives as believers and every work of this church should proceed from and be in service to the spread of this gospel story throughout the world. (*Mark 1:1 / Luke 24:46-47 / John 3:16-18 / Romans 1:16-17 / 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:2; 15:1-4 / 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 9:13 / Galatians 1:6-9 / 2 Timothy 1:8-14 / Jude 3-4*)

### *Man's Response*

The proper response to the gospel is faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, a faith that is naturally accompanied by repentance from sin. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service and works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot become His disciple. This response to the gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own pleasure and glory. Salvation is the free gift of God and is provided by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, for the glory of God alone. This salvation by grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. (*Genesis 3:15 / Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8 / Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6 / Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32 / John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17 / Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32 / Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14 / 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10 / 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 / Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15 / Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16 / Philippians 2:12-13 / Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff. / 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 / 2 Timothy 1:12 / Titus 2:11-14 / Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14 / James 2:14-26 / 1 Peter 1:2-23 / 1 John 1:6-2:11 / Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5*)

### *Man's Inheritance*

Anyone repenting of sin by the miracle of regeneration and looking to Christ and his substitutionary death is declared righteous by God through the free gift of Christ's imputed righteousness, receives the gift of eternal life, and is fully accepted by God. Thus becoming a child of God, the believer is forgiven of sin, liberated from the law of sin, and freed to pursue the fruit of new life in Christ by the active power of the Holy Spirit's indwelling. While indwelling sin remains a



reality, the Spirit leads us to grow in the likeness of Christ so that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word and deed. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve His people and hold them until the end. (*Matthew 25:34 / Acts 20:32 / Romans 8:16-17 / 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 / Galatians 3:27-29 / Ephesians 1:10-14, 18; 3:16 / Colossians 1:12; 3:24 / Titus 3:7 / Hebrews 6:12 / 1 Peter 1:4 / Revelation 21:7*)

### *The Church*

The Church is made up of sinful man, called out of the whole human race by the gift of God's grace through salvation, into the fellowship of Christ's body, which is guided by the Spirit. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination but those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the gospel. The Church exists to glorify and serve Him by faithfully doing His will on earth. This service involves a commitment to see the gospel preached, disciples made, and churches planted in the entire world. This responsibility belongs to all members of the Church as they are committed in covenant membership to the local church. The ascended Christ has given gift ministries to the Church, including prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the equipping of Christ's body so that it might mature and grow. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and oversight and the opportunity to steward their gifts for His glory and the good of the others. (*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20 / Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28 / Romans 1:7 / 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12 / Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32 / Philippians 1:1 / Colossians 1:18 / 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14 / Hebrews 11:39-40 / 1 Peter 5:1-4 / Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3*)

### *The Ordinances*

The Church observes two ordinances: believer's baptism and the Lord's Supper. Believer's baptism is only intended for the individual who has personally received the saving benefits of Christ's atoning work and become His disciple. In obedience to Christ's command, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Baptism is a visual and symbolic demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of His death and resurrection. It signifies that a former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin. Likewise, the Lord's Supper is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. This ordinance symbolizes the breaking of Christ's body and the shedding of His blood on our behalf and is to be observed repeatedly throughout the Christian life as a sign of continued participation in the atoning benefits of Christ's death. As we come to the table with an attitude of faith and self-examination, we remember and proclaim the death of Christ, receive spiritual nourishment for our souls and signify our unity with other members of Christ's body. (*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20 / Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26 / Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20 / John 3:23 / Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7 / Romans 6:3-5 / 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29 / Colossians 2:12*)

### *The Consummation*

The consummation of all things includes the future, physical, visible, personal and glorious return of Jesus Christ, the resurrection of the dead and the translation of those alive in Christ, the judgment of the just and the unjust, and the fulfillment of Christ's kingdom in the new heavens and the new earth. In the consummation, Satan, with his hosts and all those outside Christ, is finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, will live and reign with Him forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then the eager expectation of creation will be fulfilled, and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God, who makes all things new. (*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9 / Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64 / Mark 8:38; 9:43-48 / Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28 / John 14:1-3 / Acts 1:11; 17:31 / Romans 14:10 / 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58 / 2 Corinthians 5:10 / Philippians 3:20-21 / Colossians 1:5; 3:4 / 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff. / 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2 / 1 Timothy 6:14 / 2 Timothy 4:1,8 / Titus 2:13 / Hebrews 9:27-28 / James 5:8 / 2 Peter 3:7ff. / 1 John 2:28; 3:2 / Jude 14 / Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13*)

## **Appendix II**

### **Church Covenant**

Having been graciously enabled by the Holy Spirit to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves wholly to him, we do now solemnly and joyfully enter into this covenant with each other. By the grace of God at work within us, we promise:

- To submit to the Scriptures as the final authority on all issues of life and belief.
- To pursue the Lord through regular Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, and spiritual disciplines.
- To maintain a life and doctrine in accordance with the Church's statement of faith, affirmed doctrinal statements, and declared values.
- To faithfully participate in the ordinances of Baptism and Lord's Supper.
- To work together for the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace.
- To submit to the elders, pastors, and other appointed leaders of the church because of the loving authority of Jesus Christ as the head of the Church.
- To regularly contribute to the life of the Church by attending weekly services, engaging in biblical community, and serving those within and outside of the Church.
- To actively participate in the growth of other members by walking together in brotherly love and exercising affectionate care and watchfulness over one another.
- To contribute cheerfully and generously to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.
- To endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.
- To, when we move from this place, unite with some other church of like mind as soon as possible where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

Furthermore, the elders of the Church, by the grace of God, promise:

- To joyfully keep watch over your soul, knowing that we will give an account to God for your spiritual welfare, by protecting you from false teaching to the best of our ability, lovingly overseeing member discipline when necessary for the health of the whole church, and raising up other men who may care for you.
- To care for the church and seek her growth in grace, truth, and love.
- To take steps to ensure that the whole counsel of God is faithfully proclaimed and taught from the whole of Scripture.
- To equip the saints of the church for the work of ministry.
- To prayerfully seek God's will for our church community and steward her resources to the best of our ability based on our understanding of the Scriptures and the guidance of the Spirit.
- To take the lead in setting an example and join all other believers in joyfully fulfilling the responsibilities of covenant membership.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all as we endeavor to maintain this covenant with one another. Amen.