

# Grace Community Church of Gardnerville, NV

## By-Laws

### ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP

#### (1) Admission to Membership

##### **Regular Member**

Applications for membership shall be made to the Elders. The following items are prerequisites for membership: 1) giving testimony of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord (John 3:3-7; I Peter 1:23); 2) believer's baptism by immersion (Acts 2:38); 3) attendance at a membership class; 4) evidence of the fruit of the Spirit operative in one's life (Galatians 5:22, 23); 5) reading of the Constitution and By-Laws; 6) signing of the church covenant.

The Board of Elders shall promptly publish a list of applicants, interview each applicant as deemed necessary, and make a recommendation concerning the applications at a regular or special congregational meeting. The final disposition of the application is determined by a vote of the congregation. The accepted applicant will be publicly welcomed into the membership at a subsequent worship service.

##### **Associate Membership**

Associate membership is designed for believers in special circumstances, such as missionaries, church planters, or those assisting a planting effort, who desire accountability and association with Grace Community Church. Due to the special circumstances, usually involving distance, the regular duties of attendance are not required of associate members. Associate members must complete the application process as described in Article I, Section 1 of the By-Laws and comply with the church covenant, as it applies to their specific circumstance. However, associate members may not vote at any business meeting of Grace Community Church.

#### (2) Church Discipline

[Para 1] If any member becomes an offense to the church by living immorally, as defined by the Word of God (e.g., Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 6:9-10); by promoting discord in the church; or by promoting doctrine contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith of this church, he shall be interviewed and admonished in love by the Elders. If there is no repentance, then the matter shall be made known to the church and the offender shall be put under public corrective discipline. During this time the Elders and the congregation will seek the offender's repentance through prayer and admonition. If there is no repentance after a reasonable period of time, then dismissal from the membership shall follow by a vote of the congregation (Matthew 18:15-18; I Corinthians 5; II Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1; Titus 3:10-11; II Thessalonians 3:6-15).

A two thirds vote of members present at a duly called congregational meeting shall be sufficient to dismiss a member from the church.

[Para 2] Any accusation against a church member shall be submitted in writing to the Eldership. No other method of complaint except through the Eldership shall be allowed. Any other method shall be considered divisive. Use of other means shall be met with prompt correction and possible expulsion

from the membership of this church. A complaint shall not be considered unless it is accompanied by two witnesses (I Timothy 5:19-20) who have submitted letters that substantiate the specific accusation. The Elders will only consider charges on biblical grounds and by church members. Charges against an Elder shall be brought to the Eldership in the same manner, and if substantiated, then to the congregation in a special business meeting. If the accusation is found to be untrue and unfounded with reason to believe that the complaint was malicious in intent, those making the false charges shall be subject to the same procedures above.

[Para 3] On certain occasions the Elders may deem that public corrective discipline may not be a necessary or appropriate form of discipline. However, there may be a determination that some kind of public response is appropriate, and therefore a public rebuke or correction may be presented to the congregation (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

### **(3) Termination of Membership**

Any member who is absent from the church for a period of six (6) months, without financial contributions or communicating with the church, may be declared inactive by the Elders, after efforts have been made to contact the member by phone call, letter or visitation. Persons declared inactive shall be automatically dropped from the membership. Inactive members can be restored to active membership by a vote of the Elders.

A member in good standing who requests that his membership be terminated may request a letter of recommendation from the Board of Elders for the purpose of joining another church.

## **ARTICLE II: THE STRUCTURE OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

The Elders are the executive body of this church. Any established committee is primarily administrative in nature. Established subsidiary organizations or committees may initiate action by making recommendations to the Elders; however, in the case of routine matters they may take action themselves. If a doubt arises concerning the authority of a committee to make a final decision on a given issue, a recommendation on that issue should be made to the next highest authority for final disposition.

The congregation, the Elders or an established committee may appoint an ad-hoc committee whenever necessary. Ad-hoc committees shall be responsible for and limited to performing only those duties for which they were appointed and shall be considered dissolved when those duties are accomplished.

## **ARTICLE III: APPOINTMENTS AND NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

The nominating committee, consisting of the Elders shall make appointments, which shall be ratified or nullified by the congregation.

Ratification of corporate offices, elders and deacons shall take place at the Annual Business Meeting of the Church. A majority of votes cast is required to ratify or nullify an appointee, unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or By-Laws.

The term for all officers shall be one (1) year. An officer may be re-appointed to serve, as willing in the same capacity. In the event that an officer is unable to complete his term, the Full Time Pastor shall appoint a person to serve until the congregation elects someone to fill the vacancy. In the event that the Chairman is unable to complete his term of office, the Vice-Chairman succeeds him for the remainder of the term. The appointment of a person to fill an unexpired term shall not limit his eligibility for subsequent election to the same office.

The calling of the Full Time Pastor or his dismissal may only take place at a specially called business meeting. In the event that the Elders initiate dismissal of the Full Time Pastor, notice of such meeting and its purpose shall be sent by mail to each member in good standing three (3) weeks prior to the special business meeting. These elections shall be by secret ballot and require a three quarter (75%) majority vote before a call can be issued or the Pastor dismissed. The Pastor is called for an indefinite period of time. In case of resignation, the Full Time Pastor shall provide at least two (2) months notice, unless mutually waived. In the case of dismissal the Full Time Pastor shall receive three (3) months severance pay. The process for all other staff shall be provided for by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE IV: QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF OFFICERS**

### **(1) Church Corporate Officers:**

#### **A. Chairman:**

The Chairman of the Elders shall be the Full Time Pastor. He shall be chairman of the Corporation. He shall preside at all official business sessions (i.e. of the congregation and of the Elders). He shall be actively interested in the welfare of the church and all of its organizations. The Chairman shall have power of address and vote in all organizations and committees of the church.

#### **B. Vice-Chairman:**

The Vice-Chairman of the Elders shall be the vice-chairman of the Corporation. The Vice-Chairman shall perform the duties of Chairman in his absence and such other duties which the Chairman may from time to time assign.

#### **C. Secretary:**

The Secretary is an Elder or Deacon. He shall keep an accurate record of the proceedings of all business meetings of the congregation and of the Board of Elders, attend to all official correspondence, and preserve all records of church business. This person shall be secretary of the Corporation.

#### **D. Treasurer:**

The Treasurer is an Elder or Deacon and is responsible to keep an accurate record of all moneys received and expended, render an itemized report to the Elders each month, and prepare an itemized quarterly report. The Treasurer shall provide to each donor an individual "Record of Contributions" each calendar year.

## **(2) Full Time Pastor:**

The Full Time Pastor shall be a man who meets all the biblical criteria for an Elder (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). He shall have an exemplary life, witness, and walk with God. He shall have had graduate training in the pastoral ministry. Upon the acceptance of a call to this church, he shall be automatically a member of this church. The Full Time Pastor is an Elder in all respects, except that he is called to the church indefinitely and is the head Elder. The Full Time Pastor shall supervise all ministries of the church, being shepherd, counselor, and guide to the church on matters of Scripture, church polity, church growth principles, and matters pertinent to the total ministry of the church. He shall be responsible for worship, teaching, and the preaching of the Word of God. By virtue of his position, the Full Time Pastor is a member of all the church organizations and committees with full voting privileges in each. All salaried staff members are responsible and accountable to the Full Time Pastor.

## **(3) Associate Pastor(s):**

When the Elders recommend and the congregation authorizes the creation of a new staff position, and allocates the necessary funds, the Full Time Pastor shall direct the search, develop the job description, and hire an individual with suitable gifts, education, and temperament for the job, subject to approval of the Elders. Without limiting the general powers of the Elders or the congregation, the Full Time Pastor shall have full power to employ or dismiss members of the Pastoral Team. Nevertheless, every hiring or dismissal shall be in consultation with the Elders. Associate Pastors shall serve under the supervision of the Full Time Pastor and shall perform such duties as the Full Time Pastor may assign to him.

When there is a new Full Time Pastor, all pastoral and support staff members will submit an undated resignation to the new Full Time Pastor on the first day of his tenure.

## **ARTICLE V: COMMITTEES**

The Elders can activate and appoint members to the following committees, according to the needs of the congregation. Members of these committees shall serve as long as necessary and may be removed by the Elders. Committees shall remain active as long as necessary.

1. Finance Committee
2. Discipleship Committee
3. Christian Education Committee
4. Evangelism Committee
5. Women's Ministries Committee
6. Missions Committee
7. Fellowship Committee
8. Music Committee
9. Youth Committee
10. Church Planting Committee
11. Other Committees as necessary to meet the ministry needs of the church

## **ARTICLE VI: PULPIT COMMITTEE**

When a vacancy occurs in the Full Time Pastoral position, the Elders shall serve as the Pulpit Committee, with the Vice Chairman of the church chairing this committee. If there are less than six (6) Elders and Deacons, the Elders shall appoint four (4) additional members from the congregation. No more than one (1) person from a family may be on this committee. It shall carefully investigate candidates and shall make a recommendation to the congregation as to the person who should be asked to candidate. The church shall not consider more than one candidate at a time, thereby preventing the possibility of a division. The call of a pastor (i.e., to pastor the church) shall come before the congregation for consideration in a business meeting, previous notice of which is to be given by announcement at three (3) consecutive meetings of the church. A majority vote of seventy five percent (75%) of the membership shall be necessary to extend a call to the candidate to the pastoral position. The initial salary, allowances, vacation and other considerations deemed necessary will be determined by the Elders and submitted to the candidate in writing with the call.

## **ARTICLE VII: CHURCH POLICIES**

All policies formulated will become effective upon ratification by the Elders. A list of current policies will be maintained by the Elders and made available for general information. Any amendments or deletions of ratified policies must be approved by the Elders.

## **ARTICLE VIII: MISCELLANEOUS**

(1) Business sessions are to be conducted according to the following format:

- a. Scripture reading and prayer
- b. Minutes of the preceding business meeting read
- c. Tabled motions
- d. Old business
- e. New business

Members over age eighteen (18) have the right to vote with fifty (50) percent plus 1 of the voting membership constituting a quorum. All issues are decided by majority vote unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or By-Laws. Members may vote by proxy if information is provided prior to the meeting, a copy of the ballot(s) is available, and a request is made to one of the Elders.

(2) The Fiscal Year of the church ends on the last day of December. The Elders may appoint an outside auditor to inspect the records of the Church and then submit a written report at the Annual Business Meeting.

(3) The Treasurer, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and other Elders and Deacons as authorized by the Elders, of the Church, are authorized to sign checks and other documents related to the transaction of church business.