

Bylaws of Grace Community Church

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Article I: The Corporation

1.1 Name of and Location of Offices

The name of this Corporation is Grace Community Church of Huntsville. It is an Alabama nonprofit religious Corporation with its principal offices in Huntsville, Alabama.

1.2 Purpose

This Corporation is organized for exclusively religious purposes (including charitable purposes common to a pastoral church ministry as defined by Scripture). Our commission is summarized as follows: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age...(Matthew 28:18-20)”

1.3 Statement of Faith

The statement of faith of this Corporation has been developed and approved by the Elders, as stated in its Articles of Incorporation, which is filed in the Office of the Secretary of State of the State of Alabama.

1.4 Corporation Membership

The Corporation has no members. Any action involving the corporation shall only require approval of the Elders. All rights, which would otherwise vest in the members of an Alabama nonprofit corporation, shall vest in the Elders.

1.5 Management by the Elders

Subject to the limitations of the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws and of pertinent restrictions of the Corporation Code of the State of Alabama, all the activities and affairs of the Corporation shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Elders. The Elders shall have the following powers:

- To select and remove all the officers, agents, pastors, staff, and employees of the Corporation; prescribe duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these Bylaws; and fix the terms of their offices and their compensation.
- To make disbursements from the funds and properties of the Corporation to fulfill the purposes of this Corporation as defined in the Articles of Incorporation and these Bylaws. They are to conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the Corporation and to make such rules and regulations consistent with the Scriptures, with law, with the Articles of Incorporation, or with these Bylaws.
- To establish policies and practices for the church consistent with the purposes of the Corporation.
- To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purposes of the Corporation and to cause to be executed and delivered, in the corporate name, promissory notes,

bonds, debentures, deeds of trust, mortgage, pledges, hypothecations, or other evidences of debt and securities.

- To carry on a business and apply any profit that results from the business activity in which it may legally engage.

1.6 Elder Meetings

Elder meetings may be held at any place within or without the State of Alabama. (1) *Regular Elder meetings* shall be held at least monthly. Meeting times will be printed in the church bulletin. Elder meetings are open to church members; however, the Elders reserve the right to hold special closed sessions. (2) *Special Elder meetings* may be called at any time by a quorum of the Elders. A majority of the Elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum. Whenever the matter to be considered concerns calling or dismissing a staff member, or buying or selling real estate, a quorum shall consist of not less than two-thirds of the Elders. Whenever the matter to be considered is of a nature to require action by non-vocational Elders only, a majority of the non-vocational Elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum. Except as the Articles of Incorporation, these Bylaws and the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law may provide, the act or decision done or made by the Elders present at a meeting duly held at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Elders. In accordance with the provisions of Section 10-3A-39 of the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law, special meetings of the Elders shall be held upon four days notice by first-class mail or a forty-eight-hour notice given personally or by the telephone or other similar means of communication. Any such notice shall be addressed or delivered to each Elder or at such Elder's address as it is shown upon the records of the Corporation or as may have been given to the Corporation by the Elder for such purpose of notice. Elders may participate in a meeting through use of conference telephone or similar communications equipment, so long as all members participating in such meeting can communicate with one another.

1.7 Actions Without a Meeting

Any action required, or permitted to be taken by the Elders may be taken without a meeting if all members of the Elders shall individually or collectively consent in writing to a duly prepared resolution to such action. Such consent or consents shall have the same effect as a unanimous decision of the Elders and shall be documented by attaching the signed resolution with the minutes of proceeding of the Elders.

1.8 Elder Rights of Inspection

In accordance with the provisions of Section 10-3A-43 of the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law, every Elder shall have the absolute right, at any reasonable time, to inspect and copy all books, records, and documents of every kind and to inspect the physical properties of the Corporation of which such person is an Elder, for a purpose reasonably related to such person's interest as an Elder.

1.9 Elder Decision Must be Unanimous

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous agreement in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding one another before himself.

1.10 Elder Committees

Elder Committees may be appointed by resolution passed by a majority of the Elders. Committees shall be composed of one or more Elders and shall have such powers as the Elders may delegate to it by resolution, except with respect to:

- The approval of any action for which the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law also requires member's approval (must be approved by the Elders as a whole).
- The filling of Elder vacancies or any committee vacancies.
- The amendment or repeal of Bylaws or the adoption of new Bylaws.
- The amendment or repeal of any resolutions of the Elders, which by its express terms is not so amendable or repealable.
- The appointment of other committees of Elders of the members thereof.
- The approval of any self-dealing transaction, as such transactions are defined in Section 10-3A-45 of the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law.

Minutes shall be kept of each meeting of each committee.

1.11 Elder Compensation

Elders shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services; however, nothing herein contained shall be construed to preclude any Elder from serving the Corporation in any other capacity and receiving compensation. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from Grace Community Church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

1.12 Officers of the Corporation

Grace Community Church shall have officers of the Corporation as required by the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law, Section 10-3A-41. The officers of the Corporation shall be a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Corporation may also have, at the discretion of the Elders, other officers as may be appointed. The officers of the Corporation shall be chosen annually by, and shall serve at the pleasure of the Elders. Each officer shall hold his office until he shall resign, be removed, or become otherwise disqualified to serve, or until his successor shall be elected and qualified. The *Chairman* shall provide general supervision of the activities of the Corporation by facilitating Elder meetings. In the absence or disability of the Chairman, the *Vice-Chairman* shall perform all the duties of the Chairman, and when so acting shall have all the powers of, and be subject to all the restrictions upon, the Chairman. The *Secretary* shall be the recorder, and cause to be kept, minutes at the principal office or such other place as the Elders may order, of all meetings of the members, the Elders and its committees, with the time and place of holding, whether regular or special. The Secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, at the principal office in the State of Alabama the original and a copy of the Corporation's Articles and Bylaws, as amended to date. The *Treasurer* shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of the Corporation, as designated by the Elders. He shall make, or cause to be made, the financial reports, as required by the Elders, and at the regular meeting of the church members.

Article II: The Fellowship

2.1 Purpose

The fellowship is a congregation of Christian believers who have applied for membership in Grace Community Church of Huntsville and have been accepted. They are a spiritual body, united for the spiritual purposes set forth in the Articles of Incorporation at Article II, and Article I of these Bylaws. The terms “fellowship” and “church” will be used interchangeably.

2.2 Meetings of the Church

A regular meeting of the fellowship members shall be held in January of each year. The Elders will provide reports on the affairs of the Corporation and will identify actions needed by the members, including but not limited to: affirmation of the appointments made by the Elders of those who shall serve as Elders for the ensuing year and the affirmation of those qualified in the office of Servant Leader. The members will affirm by publicly agreeing with the Elders and following their leadership. Special meetings of the fellowship members may be called at any time by order of the Elders. At all meetings of the members, whether regular, special, or adjourned, the members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

2.3 Notice for Meetings

Notice for regular meetings, shall be given from the pulpit by the Elders for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. In addition, notice shall be published in the regular church bulletin for two successive Sundays prior to such meeting. Notice of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven (7) days prior to the meeting and shall also be published in the regular church bulletin on the Sunday immediately preceding the meeting.

Article III: Fellowship Members

3.1 Who Can be a Member?

Active membership in the Grace Community Church of Huntsville is open to all persons who confess Christ as their Lord and Savior and who have been baptized. Membership is in the Church and not the Corporation.

3.2 Member Voting Privileges

In most instances, members will not be asked by the Elders to vote on church decisions and actions. Members will be asked to affirm the decisions or actions of the Elders through their public acknowledgement and by following the changes. In some cases, the Elders may identify a decision or action (such as a large financial investment) where wisdom would commend a vote of the members to confirm the decision. In such cases,

voting privileges are restricted to members who are in good standing, who are not under any disciplinary action, and who have passed their sixteenth (16) birthday. Members must be present to vote and may not vote by proxy.

3.3 Applying for Membership

Anyone believing they qualify for membership may speak with an Elder and request a membership application. The person will be given an application for membership, a copy of the Statement of Faith, and a copy of the Bylaws. An Elder or Deacon will meet with that person after receiving the application. Each applicant shall assent to the Statement of Faith, subscribe to the Bylaws, and shall testify publicly before the Elders at a regularly held meeting for prospective members. If, upon review of an application for membership or after meeting with a prospective member, the Elders determine that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior, or that there is a lack of evidence of godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied. The decision made by the Elders shall be final and there shall be no appeal to any court from that decision.

3.4 Publicly Acknowledging Members

Applicants admitted to membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the Elders. The admitted applicants shall publicly affirm their membership commitment and be publicly acknowledged as members.

3.5 Member Responsibilities

Members shall seek to exercise their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of all the church body and shall submit to the loving rule of the Elders.

3.6 Membership Roll Removal

The names of any members who have not attended a worship service at Grace Community Church for a period of six months or longer may be removed from the membership rolls.

Article IV: Church Discipline

4.1 Purpose of Discipline

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

4.2 Who is Subject to Church Discipline

Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18

4.3 How Church Discipline is Normally Conducted

Before a dismissal, (1) it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's false doctrine or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then (2) the warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. The first and second warnings may occur with no specified time interval. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of Elders. If the Elders determine (after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19) that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the congregation at a regularly scheduled worship service to call the erring individual to repentance. If the erring individual demonstrates repentance, then the notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then (4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and /or membership of the church at a regularly scheduled worship service. If the erring individual, after such a dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges, and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership. The erring individual may not return to the worship services until they demonstrate repentance, request reinstatement before the Elders, and are publicly restored.

4.4 Instances Where the Elders May Direct Proceed to the Third of Fourth Stage of Church Discipline

In some instances, the Elders may proceed directly to the third stage of church discipline, (i.e. the informing of the church at a regularly scheduled worship service to call the erring individual to repentance) or to the fourth stage of church discipline, (i.e. the dismissal from the fellowship and/or membership of the church) when one or more of the following have occurred:

- Where the transgression and the refusal to repent have been public, i.e. openly and to the offense of the whole church (1 Cor. 5:1-5),
- Where the disciplined party has taught or otherwise disseminated doctrine deemed false or erroneous by the Elders, then chose to disregard the direction and reproof of the Elders (Romans 16:17), or
- Where the disciplined party has been warned twice to cease from factious and divisive conduct and has chosen to disregard that warning (Titus 3:10-11).

4.5 Appeals and Resignations of Those Under Church Discipline

The members of the church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages

of church discipline. Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraphs, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.

4.6 Asking Someone Not to be Present Upon Church Premises

Separate and apart from the process of church discipline, but subject to the discretion and approval of the Elders, an individual may be notified that he or she is not to be present upon church premises for such a period of time as is deemed necessary for the safety and well being of others on church premises.

Article V: Elders

5.1 Number of Elders

In accordance with the provisions of Section 10-3A-35 of the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law, the authorized number of Elders (directors) of the Corporation shall not be less than three (3) until changed by an amendment to the Articles of Incorporation or by an amendment to these Bylaws.

5.2 Selection of Elders

Recommendations to fill the office of Elder can be made by any church member. The Elders shall review all recommendations and determine each man's qualifications and approve, disapprove, or add to the list of men being considered for the office. A proposed list of men prepared and approved by the Elders shall be publicly posted in alphabetical order at least three weeks prior to the regular meeting or special meeting of the church members. At this meeting, the men shall be presented to the members to affirm the decision of the Elders. The newly appointed Elders shall assume office immediately. Each Elder shall be reaffirmed annually.

5.3 Qualifications of Elders

Each Elder must be an active member of this church and possess the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He shall be:

- Blameless as a steward of God; above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)
- Husband of one wife; a one-woman man (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6)
- Temperate, sober, vigilant (1 Timothy 3:2)
- Sober-minded, prudent (1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:8)
- Of good behavior; orderly, respectable (1 Timothy 3:2)
- Given to hospitality (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)
- Apt to teach; able to teach; he can exhort believers and refute false teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)
- Not given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- Not violent, not pugnacious (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- Patient, moderate, forbearing, gentle (1 Timothy 3:3)

- Not a brawler; uncontentious; not soon angry or quick tempered (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- Not covetous; not a lover of money; not greedy of base gain (1 Timothy 3:3, Titus 1:7)
- Rules well his own house; his children are faithful, not accused of rebellion to God (1 Timothy 3:4, Titus 1:7)
- Not a novice; not a new convert (1 Timothy 3:6)
- Has a good report or reputation with outsiders (1 Timothy 3:7)
- Not self-willed (Titus 1:7)
- A lover of what is good (Titus 1:7)
- Just, fair (Titus 1:8)
- Holy, devout (Titus 1:8)
- Self-Controlled (Titus 1:8)

5.4 Elder Vacancies

A vacancy or vacancies in the Elders shall be deemed to exist in case of death, resignation, or removal of any Elder, or if the Elders determine that a need exists. Subject to the provision of Section 10-3A-36 of the Alabama Nonprofit Religious Corporation Law, any Elder may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Elders, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effectiveness of such resignation. If the resignation is to take effect at some future time, a successor may be selected before that time. Any Elder may be removed from office at any regular or special meeting of the Elders if he is found to be physically or mentally incapacitated or spiritually unqualified (according to pertinent Scripture, including 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9), after thorough corroborating investigation by the Elders, in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18 and 1 Timothy 5:19. When an Elder is removed because of sin that is deemed sufficient to disqualify him from shepherding, and if he refuses to repent from that sin, the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke, and notice shall be made before the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly-scheduled worship service as prescribed in 1 Timothy 5:20.

Article VI: Miscellaneous

6.1 Staff

The Elders shall select staff, as needed and when affordable. Staff shall include: administration and maintenance, vocational ministry, and ministry support personnel. Except at the discretion of the Elders, all staff shall be fellowship members. Vocational ministry staff shall be selected by the Elders and will be affirmed by the members of the church at its regular meeting or at a special business meeting. Vocational ministry staff will be men who meet the qualification of an Elder, as specified in Article V, Elders, Paragraph 5.3. They will remain on staff for an indefinite period of time subject to the following reservations: The Elders reserve the right to dismiss vocational ministry staff members upon giving him one month's written notice of its intention to dismiss. The vocational ministry staff member must give one month's notice if they intend to resign. The time limit of a vocational ministry staff member's resignation or dismissal is subject

to a lesser time if both the staff member and the Elders by mutual agreement provide otherwise. The vocational ministry staff member has the right for a single appeal to the Elders at a special Elder meeting to present his position if he desires to remain at Grace Community Church. Vocational ministry staff will not automatically become an Elder of Grace Community Church, but may be considered for Elder after a period of observation. Except at the discretion of the Elders, mothers with young children will not be employed as church staff.

6.2 Servant Leaders (commonly known as Deacons)

Servant Leaders shall consist of members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. A Servant Leader shall be a man or woman of dignity, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not fond of sordid gain, holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience, first tested and found above reproach. Women serving as Servant Leaders will not be given responsibilities that would violate 1 Timothy 2:12. Servant Leaders shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the saints including all activities related to carrying out the purposes of GCC. Each Servant Leader shall be responsible for one or more tasks under the oversight of a designated Elder. As needs arise Servant Leaders shall be chosen by the Elders (although any member may make recommendations) and publicly presented at least three weeks prior to the regular meeting or special meeting. At this meeting the proposed Servant Leaders will be presented to the members for affirmation and will begin service immediately. Each Servant Leader will be reaffirmed annually. Servant Leaders shall serve for as long as the task for which they are responsible is necessary, or until they ask to be relieved, or until the Elders deem it to be in the best interest of GCC that he (or she) be replaced. In the event that a vacancy occurs, the Elders may fill the vacancy.

6.3 Licensing, Ordination, and Commissioning

Ministry desire and gifting are recognized in three ways: 1) A license is issued by the Elders and is given in recognition of a man's desire and qualification for that ministry. Its aim is to allow a man to perform the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the church. Licenses will be evaluated and issued on a yearly basis. 2) Ordination refers to the unanimous recognition by the Elders of a man's desire for the ministry, preparation as a shepherd, and qualification to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office. 3) When local-church certification is required for ministry where ordination would be unnecessary or inappropriate, a person is commissioned by the Elders to minister. This authorization continues as long as the opportunity to minister remains in effect and as long as the person maintains the qualifications for ministry.

6.4 Settlement of Disputes

In any dispute arising between church members, pastors, or staff pertaining to any matter including: spiritual teaching or practices, church finances, or title to property purchase with church contributions, the dispute shall be resolved by the Elders of the church. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration, in a spirit of humility, with each

Elder regarding one another before himself and striving to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3)

6.5 Endorsement of Documents and Contracts

The Elders, except as in the Bylaws otherwise provided, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation. The authority may be general or confined to specific instances. Unless so authorized by the Elders, no officer, agent, or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Corporation by any contract or agreement, or to pledge its credit, or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

6.6 Bylaw Amendments

The Elders may amend the Bylaws or develop new Bylaws. Whenever an amendment or new Bylaw is adopted, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original Bylaws, in the appropriate place. If any Bylaw is repealed, the fact of repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in the book. A brief description of amendments shall be listed, with date and description of change, in Appendix 1.

6.7 Receipt, Investment, and Disbursement of Funds

The Corporation shall receive all monies or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which the Corporation was formed (as shown by the Articles of Incorporation). However, nothing requires the Elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind if they determine that receipt of the money or property is contrary to the expressed purpose of the Corporation as shown in the Articles. The Corporation shall hold, manage, and disburse any funds or properties received by it from any source in a manner that is consistent with the expressed purposes of this Corporation.

6.8 Corporate Records and Reports

The Corporation shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records, and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of business in the State of Alabama, as fixed by the Elders. Every Elder shall have the absolute right at any reasonable time to inspect all books, records, documents of every kind, and the physical properties of the Corporation, and also of its subsidiary organizations, if any. The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December in each year.

6.9 Dissolution of the Corporation

Upon dissolution of this Corporation, the Elders shall cause the assets to be distributed to another Corporation with purposes similar to that identified in these Bylaws and of the Articles of Incorporation.

APPENDIX 1: DESCRIPTIONS OF BY-LAW AMMENDMENTS

January, 2006 (approved by Elders on November 19, 2005)
Changed from Deacons to Servant Leaders.