



## **Constitution and Bylaws**

### **CONSTITUTION**

#### **Preamble**

So that “all things should be done decently and in order” (1 Cor 14:40) we, the members of the Grace Bible Fellowship, do declare and establish this Constitution and Bylaws to which we voluntarily and solemnly submit ourselves.

#### **Article 1: Name**

The name of this Religious Society is “Grace Bible Fellowship of Three Hills”, an Alberta non-profit Religious Society with its principal offices in Three Hills, Alberta, Canada. This Religious Society may also be called or known as “Grace Bible Fellowship” without detracting from its actual incorporated name.

#### **Article 2: Purpose**

Striving to do “all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31), Grace Bible Fellowship is, and shall be, organized exclusively for the advancement of the Christian faith within the Three Hills community and beyond by passionately exalting God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, accurately expounding “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jude 1:3), consistently engaging in the pursuit of a holy life (Rom 6; Eph 4:17-24; 1 Thess 4:1-8; 1 Tim 4:7-8; 6:11; Heb 12:14), diligently edifying and equipping the members of the local church “for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12), and faithfully evangelizing the lost in fulfillment of the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

## BYLAWS

### Article 1: Affiliation

Grace Bible Fellowship exists as an autonomous, non-denominational congregation of evangelical, Bible-believing Christians. As such, Grace Bible Fellowship exists as a non-profit Religious Society and is registered with the Provincial Government of Alberta. Although independent of any denominational attachment, the church is willing to maintain fellowship with, and support, Christians or Christian organizations who are sympathetic to the teachings and aims of this church.

### Article 2: Doctrinal Statement

**2.1 The Doctrinal Statement** The Doctrinal Statement is integral to the life and aims of Grace Bible Fellowship. The core beliefs of this congregation are published in a separate document entitled “What We Teach: The Doctrinal Statement of Grace Bible Fellowship.”

**2.2 The Authority of the Doctrinal Statement** Grace Bible Fellowship recognizes that the Bible is the sole and final source of all that the congregation believes and practices. The congregation believes, however, that the aforementioned Doctrinal Statement accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and is therefore binding on all its members. Except for the purposes of comparing, contrasting, or refuting, all literature used or endorsed by the church shall express substantial agreement with the Doctrinal Statement of this congregation.

### Article 3: Membership

**3.1 Corporate Membership** This Religious Society shall have no members. Any action which would otherwise require approval by a majority of all members shall only require approval of the Board of Elders (also referred to as the “Elders,” the “Eldership” or the “Council of Elders”). All rights which would otherwise vest in the members shall vest in the Board of Elders..

**3.2 Church Membership** Nothing contained in Section 1 of this Article shall be construed to limit the right of the Religious Society to refer to persons associated with the Religious Society as “members” even though such persons are not corporate members, and no such reference in or outside of these Bylaws shall constitute anyone being a member, within the meaning of Section 1(c) of the Religious Societies’ Land Act. The Religious Society may confer by amendment of its Articles or of these Bylaws some or all of the rights of a member, as set forth in the Religious Societies’ Land Act, upon any person(s) formally associated with Grace Bible Fellowship through church membership, but no such person(s) shall be a member within the meaning of said Section 1(c).

**3.2.1 The Purpose of Church Membership** When individuals are saved, they become members of the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13). Being united to Christ and the other members of the body in this way, the Believer is therefore qualified to become a member of a local expression of that body.

To become a member of a church is to formally commit oneself to an identifiable, local body of believers who have joined together for specific, divinely ordained purposes. These purposes include receiving instruction from God's Word (Acts 2:42; 1 Tim 4:13; 2 Tim 4:2), serving and edifying one another through the proper use of spiritual gifts (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:4-31; 1 Pet 4:10-11), participating in the ordinances of baptism and the Lord Supper (Luke 22:19-20; Acts 2:38-42), and proclaiming the gospel to those who are lost (Matt 28:18-20). In addition, when one becomes a member of a church, they submit to the care and the authority of the biblically qualified Elders whom God has placed in that particular assembly (Heb 13:17).

When an individual becomes a member of Grace Bible Fellowship they enter into a reciprocal relationship. On the one hand, the church agrees to take responsibility for the spiritual health and well-being of the individual. On the other, the individual agrees to take responsibility for the spiritual health and well-being of the corporate body.

**3.2.2 The Conditions of Church Membership** Membership in Grace Bible Fellowship shall be open to all Believers who have expressed genuine faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, who have testified to their faith through Believer's Baptism and who evidence a godly testimony. Members must express substantial agreement with the Doctrinal Statement of this congregation.

**3.2.3 Application for Church Membership** Any person desiring to become a member of Grace Bible Fellowship shall make their request, verbally or in written form, to an Elder of the church. Upon making such a request the applicant will receive a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws, as well as "What We Teach: The Doctrinal Statement of Grace Bible Fellowship." Following the receipt of these documents an Elder shall meet with the applicant to discuss his or her personal testimony, basic Christian experience, doctrinal beliefs, and the seriousness of their intention to wholeheartedly participate the ministry of this local assembly.

**3.2.4 Admission to Church Membership** Upon the unanimous consent of the Eldership, the applicant will be admitted into membership and be presented to the congregation at a service designated by the Elders. At the service applicants will give a public testimony of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and affirm their commitment to the beliefs and purposes of Grace Bible Fellowship. In response, the congregation will acknowledge and affirm their commitment to the new member.

**3.2.5 Denial to Church Membership** If, upon reviewing an application for membership, the Eldership determines that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her

Saviour, has not submitted to Believer's Baptism, and/or lacks evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership will be denied. The decision of the Elders is final and no appeal to an outside court may overturn that decision.

**3.2.6 Termination of Church Membership** Membership in Grace Bible Fellowship may be terminated in one of several ways:

*3.2.6.1 Termination by Transfer* Upon receiving a written request, the Eldership shall provide a letter of transfer to members of good standing, providing they are transferring their membership to another evangelical churches. Such a letter will effectively terminate the individual's membership at Grace Bible Fellowship.

*3.2.6.2 Termination by Request* A member may request to remove his or her membership from Grace Bible Fellowship by making their request in written form to an Elder of the church. This may be done at any time, provided the member is not currently under church discipline. All those who so remove their membership must go through the original application process if they want to rejoin the church.

*3.2.6.3 Termination by Exclusion* Any member who is habitually absent from the meetings of the church, for a period of six months or more, may be excluded from membership at the discretion of the Elders.

*3.2.6.4 Termination by Excommunication* It is right and in harmony with the Scriptures for the Elders to exclude from this fellowship any person who persists in holding false doctrine, who habitually conducts themselves in a manner inconsistent with his or her Christian profession, or who continues to disturb the peace and unity of the Church (Matt 18:15-17; Rom 16:17; 1 Cor 5; 2 Thess 3:6-15; Titus 3:10-11).

**3.2.7 The Responsibilities of Church Membership** Members of Grace Bible Fellowship voluntarily commit themselves to the following responsibilities: 1) to promote Believer's Baptism; 2) to regular attendance and participation in the services of the congregation; 3) to grow in their Christian walk through ongoing Bible study and prayer; 4) to uphold fellow members in prayer; 5) to live a disciplined life and receive correction when needed; 6) to listen intently to the exposition of God's Word and respond appropriately; 7) to commit themselves to deeper awareness and an accurate understanding of sound theology; 8) to give cheerfully to the work of the church; 9) to faithfully proclaim the Gospel to those who are lost; 10) to humbly submit to the leadership of the church; and 11) to actively serve the local body through the use of their spiritual gifts and talents.

**3.2.8 Rights and Privileges of Church Membership** The members of Grace Bible Fellowship are entitled to participate in church meetings and vote on matters presented to them by the Eldership provided they are members in good standing, who are not under disciplinary action, and who are 16 years of age or older. Every member shall have the right to inspect all books, records, and documents of the church. For the sake of

confidentiality, these documents may be redacted to protect the anonymity of church members. An officer of the church will deliver these redacted documents to the member who issued the request within a reasonable timeframe.

**3.2.9 Restrictions of Church Membership** Grace Bible Fellowship is a body under the headship of Jesus Christ and voluntarily exists under, and submits to, the direction of the Eldership who serve as undershepherds of that body. As such, membership in the church does not grant members any real property, contract, or civil rights within the Society. Since the members of Grace Bible Fellowship do not constitute a legislative body, individuals cannot initiate any church action or pass resolutions binding upon the Society. Membership is not assignable to any personal representative, heir, or devisee.

**3.2.10 Records of Church Membership** The Elders shall maintain and periodically revise the membership roll. A current and updated membership roll shall be presented to the membership at the Regular Annual Meeting.

#### **Article 4: Church Government**

Grace Bible Fellowship shall be governed by Eldership (also referred to as the “Elders,” the “Board of Elders” or the “Council of Elders”) who have been tasked with the right and responsibility to shepherd the flock entrusted to their care (Acts 20:28). As such, all the activities and affairs of the church shall be exercised by, or under the direction of, the Eldership. The Elders are subject to no higher ecclesiastical authority than Christ, who is the Chief Shepherd (1 Pet 5:1-4).

**4.1 Description of the Eldership** The Eldership consists of a plurality of biblically qualified men (known alternately as elders, overseers, or pastors). These men, being equal in position, authority, and responsibility, have been appointed by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28) to jointly shepherd the local body of Believers.

The distinction between “the Elders” and “the Pastor” is completely foreign to the New Testament. The various words used to describe local church leadership (i.e., “elders,” “overseers,” and “pastors”) are used interchangeably and refer to the same office and group of men (Acts 20:17, 28; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:1-2). Therefore, Grace Bible Fellowship makes no distinction in respect to the responsibilities, qualifications, and authority of its Elders and pastors.

**4.2 Selection, Examination, and Recognition of Elders** Grace Bible Fellowship values biblical leadership. As such, this church has established a robust process for the selecting, examination, and recognition of its spiritual leaders that is in keeping with the testimony of Scripture itself.

**4.2.1 The Selection of Potential Elders** Potential Elders may be selected for examination in one of two ways. First, as part of their responsibility to perpetuate the Eldership of this

church, the Elders may select a man who is a member of Grace Bible Fellowship for consideration. Second, any member of this church who believes that he himself or another member of the congregation, is qualified to serve as an Elder may submit his name at any time to the Council of Elders for consideration.

**4.2.2 The Examination of Potential Elders** According to Scripture, potential Elders must be thoroughly examined (1 Tim 3:10), and meet certain biblical qualifications (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-9; 1 Pet 5:1-5), before they are admitted into the Eldership. Prospective Elders shall be examined in three basic stages:

*4.2.2.1 Self-Examination* Potential Elders will be asked to examine themselves as to their motivation, calling, gifts, and qualifications as reflected in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-5. In order to familiarize themselves with the responsibilities of the Eldership and to prepare them for the role, potential Elders will be provided with certain tasks and materials that need to be completed prior to the second stage of the examination process.

*4.2.2.2 Examination by the Eldership* Potential Elders will be examined by the Eldership to determine their motivation, calling, gifts, and qualifications as reflected in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-5. Candidates will also be examined as to their biblical knowledge, theological understanding, and practical ministry skills.

*4.2.2.3 Examination by the Church Membership* The membership of Grace Bible Fellowship will be informed of any candidate who has successfully completed the examination by the Eldership. At this time, members will be invited to attend a special congregational meeting to hear the candidates testimony and examine their theological position. Following this meeting, members will be encouraged to provide the Elders with any scriptural grounds that might disqualify the individual from the office. These grounds may be provided in person or in written, signed correspondence. Prospective Elders will be advised of any concerns that have been brought before the Eldership. If no scriptural grounds for disqualification can be found the potential Elder will be appointed to the office by the Eldership and affirmed by the church membership at a regular worship service.

**4.2.3 The Recognition of Potential Elders** Applicants who successfully complete the examination process shall be recognized at a regular worship service. Elders will be ordained to the office through prayer and the laying on of hands by the Eldership (1 Tim 4:14; 5:22) and assume said office immediately thereafter.

**4.3 Qualifications of Elders** An Elder must be a male, at least 21 years of age, and a member in good standing who agrees to uphold the Doctrinal Statement, as well as the Constitution and Bylaws, of Grace Bible Fellowship.

According to Scripture, each Elder must possess each of the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:1–7, Titus 1:6–9 and 1 Peter 5:1-5. As such, a prospective Elder shall:

**4.3.1 Be a man (1 Tim 3:6; Titus 1:6)** Scripture prohibits women from teaching or exercising spiritual authority over the men of the church (1 Cor 14:33b-35; 1 Tim 2:8-15; 3:1-7). As such, only men shall be admitted to the Eldership in keeping with the explicit teaching and numerous examples of Scripture.

**4.3.2 Aspire to the office of Elder (1 Tim 3:1; 1 Pet 5:2)** An Elder must possess a deep desire to serve the church because he is genuinely concerned, and committed to, the welfare of the church.

**4.3.3 Be above reproach (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6-7)** An Elder must be free from any disgraceful character trait or conduct which might offer grounds for accusation. When attacked, his character and conduct must be able withstand impartial examination.

**4.3.4 Be an example to the flock (1 Pet 5:3)** An Elder must personally display what it means to live a godly life. Through word and deed, they exemplify how a Believer should think, feel, and act. As such, their lives model a steadfast devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ and an unwavering commitment to His commands, which others are to emulate (cf. 1 Tim 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; Heb 13:7).

**4.3.5 Be the husband of one wife (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6)** Provided that he is married, an Elder must be a faithful husband. He must be one who has refrained from sexual or marital infidelity, from marital separation, from divorce, or from remarriage following divorce.

**4.3.6 Be sober-minded (1 Tim 3:2)** An Elder must evidence self-control, balanced discernment, and an absence of rash behavior.

**4.3.7 Be self-controlled (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)** An Elder must evidence good judgment, discretion and common sense.

**4.3.8 Be disciplined (Titus 1:8)** An Elder must evidence a disciplined lifestyle, particularly in the area of physical desires.

**4.3.9 Be respectable (1 Tim 3:2)** An Elder must evidence a well-ordered life and good behavior; one that engenders the respect of others.

**4.3.10 Be hospitable (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)** An Elder must evidence a willingness to share his life, home, and personal resources with others.

**4.3.11 Be able to teach (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:9)** An Elder must be able to clearly and accurately expound the biblical text in a variety of contexts, including but not limited to

teaching from the pulpit, as a Sunday School teacher, as a small group leader, or through one-on-one discipleship.

**4.3.12 Hold firm to the trustworthy Word (Titus 1:9)** An Elder must evidence an unwavering confidence in, and commitment to, the teachings of Scripture as the authoritative revelation of God. He faithfully teaches and models Scripture at all times and in all situations.

**4.3.13 Be able to give instruction in sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)** An Elder must be able to exhort Believers who are falling into moral or doctrinal error by pointing them back to the truth of God's Word.

**4.3.14 Be able to refute those who contradict sound doctrine (Titus 1:9)** An Elder must be able to recognize false teaching and possess a willingness to confront those who are in, or in danger of falling into, doctrinal error.

**4.3.15 Not be a drunkard (1 Tim 3:3; Titus 1:7)** An Elder must evidence self-restraint in the use of alcohol.

**4.3.16 Not be violent (1 Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7)** An Elder must evidence a peace-loving demeanor. He is not be prone to violent outbursts. He is not ill-tempered or a brawler.

**4.3.17 Be gentle (1 Tim 3:3)** An Elder must evidence a gentle spirit which is characterized by Christlike forbearance, tenderness, and graciousness.

**4.3.18 Not be Quarrelsome (1 Tim 3:3)** An Elder must evidence an uncontentious, peace-loving spirit that is gentle to all, patient, and moderated by humility when correcting those who are in opposition. He works well with others.

**4.3.19 Not be Arrogant (Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:3)** An Elder must be considerate of the thoughts, feelings and desires others. He has no personal agenda which drives him to assert his will over others.

**4.3.20 Be Humble (1 Pet 5:5)** An Elder must demonstrate a lowliness of mind and an attitude which regards the needs, desires, and ideas of others as more worthy of consideration than their own. Rather than seeking glory or prominence, they must be willing to learn from others and perform menial tasks with no desire for recognition.

**4.3.21 Not be Quick-Tempered (Titus 1:7)** An Elder must keep his emotions under control when faced with difficult situations.

**4.3.22 Not be a lover of money (1 Tim 3:3, Titus 1:7; 1 Pet 5:2)** An Elder must evidence a godly contentment that relies on God's gracious provision. He does not possess a



mercenary mindset in relation to the work of the ministry, i.e., He's not in it for the money.

**4.3.23 *Manage his own household well (1 Tim 3:4)*** An Elder must have proven his ability to lead, manage, and care for the Body of Christ by the way he has effectively managed his own household.

**4.3.24 *Have children who are submissive (1 Tim 3:4; Titus 1:7)*** An Elder must have proven his ability to lead, manage, and care for the Body of Christ by raising children who are responsive to his kind and compassionate leadership.

**4.3.25 *Have children not open to the charge of debauchery or insubordination (Titus 1:7)*** An Elder must have proven his ability to lead, manage, and care for the Body of Christ by raising children who are trustworthy and lead well-ordered, dutiful lives.

**4.3.26 *Not be a recent convert (1 Tim 3:6)*** An Elder must evidence a consistent level of spiritual maturity. He must be a model that others can emulate.

**4.3.27 *Be well thought of by outsiders (1 Tim 3:7)*** An Elder must possess a good reputation among the unsaved community.

**4.3.28 *Be a lover of good (Titus 1:8)*** An Elder must evidence a consistent desire to do helpful, kind things for those around him.

**4.3.29 *Be upright (Titus 1:8)*** An Elder must evidence a righteous desire to conform his actions and attitudes to God's perfect will. He can be counted on to render fair and impartial decisions.

**4.3.30 *Be holy (Titus 1:8)*** An Elder must evidence a consistent desire to separate himself from sin and setting himself apart unto God and His work.

**4.4 Number of Elders** As modeled in the New Testament, Grace Bible Fellowship will always be governed by a plurality of Elders (Acts 14:23; 15, 22:6; 20:17; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 5:17; Titus 1:5; James 5:14). In accordance with the provisions of the Declaration of Incorporation, the authorized number of directors of the Religious Society shall not be less than three (3) until changed by an amendment to the Declaration of Incorporation or these Bylaws. The maximum number of Elders shall be determined by the number of men whom God calls, qualifies, and equips for the ministry.

**4.5 Term of Elders** Elders shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years and shall be eligible for reappointment at the completion of that term. An Elder may serve in perpetuity or until he ceases according to Section 10 of this Article.

**4.6 Responsibilities of Elders** Through His Word, God has outlined several responsibilities for all those who serve as Elders in the church of Christ. These responsibilities are shouldered by the Eldership collectively as well as by Elders individually. While certain activities may be delegated to others, these responsibilities cannot be neglected by the shepherds of the sheep. These responsibilities have been mandated by God and must be faithfully attended to for the sake of God's Elect.

**4.6.1 Elders are to Shepherd the Church (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2-3)** In the same way that a shepherd lovingly tends his flock, God has called Elders to tenderly care for the local church. "Shepherding" describes the general manner and scope of the Elder's responsibility. He is to be kind, compassionate, and affectionate. His ministry is extensive. It includes leading, feeding, protecting, and strengthening the flock.

**4.6.2 Elders are to Labor in the Church (Acts 20:35; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 5:17)** God has called Elders to work hard on behalf of those they serve. Far more than attending a few meetings every now and then, Elders must expend great time and energy ministering directly to those committed to their charge. This responsibility requires tremendous self-discipline and self-sacrifice. Elders must be willing 1) to set aside their own agendas; and 2) to devote sufficient time, energy, and resources for the sake of the church.

**4.6.3 Elders are to Lead the Church (1 Tim 5:17; 1 Thess 5:12; 1 Peter 5:3)** God has called Elders to lead the church. Although this activity entails the proper use of authority, Elders do not lead the church by dictum alone. Rather, they are to be living examples of what God has called Believers to be and do. In order to carry out this responsibility Elders must: 1) Model Christlike conduct in all situations and circumstances; 2) Be actively involved in the work of the ministry and available to the people they serve; 3) Be "hospitable" (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:8), sharing their lives with those they serve; and 4) Engage in regular and systematic visitation of church members.

**4.6.4 Elders are to Rule in the Church (1 Pet 5:2; Heb 13:7, 17, 24)** God has called Elders to direct the affairs of the local congregation. They are to lead and guide the church through the proper use of authority, directing the members of the church to live and act in a manner consistent with God's revealed will. As such, when their shepherding and teaching stray from Scripture, the Elder's authority is no longer binding on the congregation. Consequently, fulfilling this responsibility requires that Elders: 1) "Keep a close watch on [themselves] and on the teaching" (1 Tim 4:16); 2) Exercise authority over all the activities, affairs, assets, and attendees of the church; 3) Give themselves to intentional planning that facilitates the growth and development of the church; 4) Develop policies and procedures that uphold Biblical principles and practices; 5) Diligently teach and instruct the church to live according to the Word of God; and 6) Enact corrective and restorative discipline when individuals fail to live according to the Word.

**4.6.5 Elders are to Watch Over the Church (Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:2)** God has called Elders to exercise protective oversight. They are to observe the condition of the flock entrusted

to their care and ensure that they are healthy and productive in the things of God. In order to fulfill this responsibility Elders must: 1) Engage in regular and systematic visitation so as to ascertain the spiritual condition of church members; 2) Provide sound Biblical counsel that not only promotes Godly thinking and behavior but keeps members from straying from the Lord and falling prey to the enemy; 3) Pray with and for those committed to their care; and 4) Diligently pursue those who have stumbled in their spiritual walk.

**4.6.6 Elders are to Guard the Church (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 1:9-11)** God has called Elders to protect the church from harmful influences that arise from outside the congregation. In order to accomplish this responsibility Elders must: 1) Hold fast to the “trustworthy word” and 2) “Give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it” (Titus 1:9-11).

**4.6.7 Elders are to Strengthen the Church (Acts 20:35; James 5:14-15)** God has called Elders to fortify the weak, heal the sick, and recover the lost. In order to fulfill this responsibility Elders must: 1) Strengthen the faith of the congregation through the regular, systematic exposition of Scripture; 2) Offer sound Biblical counsel that addresses the cares and concerns of the individual; 3) Visit the sick; 4) Provide material support to those in need; and 5) Pray with and for those committed to their care.

**4.6.8 Elders are to Teach the Church (1 Thess 5:12; 1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Titus 1:9)** God has called Elders to fearlessly declare “the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints” (Jud 1:3). Using sound principles of hermeneutics, the Elder must seek to expound the Scriptures in keeping with the sense and meaning intended by the Spirit of God. No other group or individual in the church has been called to admonish the flock with sound doctrine or to defend the truth against false teachers. This is the Elder’s direct responsibility. As such, Elders must faithfully communicate the Scriptures in the pulpit, the Sunday School classroom, small group Bible studies, etc.

**4.6.9 Elders are to Equip Others for Ministry within the Church (Eph 4:11-16)** God has called Elders to train and equip the members of the church “for the work of ministry” (Eph 4:12). In order to fulfill this responsibility Elders must: 1) Teach what needs to be done in ministry; 2) Model how ministry is done; 3) Provide opportunities for others to participate in ministry with them; and 4) Provide resources, evaluation and encouragement to those engaged in ministry.

**4.6.10 Elders are to Train Future Elders for the Church (2 Tim 2:2)** God has called Elders to raise up the future leaders of the church. This task does not belong primarily to Bible colleges or seminaries. It is the responsibility of the Eldership to equip those who will faithfully carry out the ministry of the gospel to succeeding generations. In order to fulfill this responsibility Elders must: 1) Observe and identify potential Eldership candidates using the Biblical qualifications (1 Tim 3:1–7; Titus 1:6–9; 1 Pet 5:1-5) as an authoritative guide; 2) Establish a training regimen that seeks to develop the candidate’s Biblical and

theological awareness, Christlikeness of character, and competence in ministry; 3) Provide a venue in which the candidate may be “tested” (1 Tim 3:10); and 4) Ordain successful candidates to the Eldership.

**4.7 Powers of the Elders** All the activities and affairs of Grace Bible Fellowship shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Eldership, who are responsible to shepherding the flock entrusted to their care (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2). In order to carry out this task the Eldership is endowed with certain powers. These powers include the ability:

**4.7.1** To generally conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the church and establish policies and practices which they deem best to further the ministry of Grace Bible Fellowship;

**4.7.2** To ordain Elders to the work of the ministry, which includes, but is not limited to, presiding over the services of the church, teaching in the church, administering of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper, and solemnizing marriages.

**4.7.3** To recognize and financially support an Elder, or Elders, from amongst the Eldership who are called to shepherd the church on a full- or part-time basis. This teaching Elder is equal to all other Elders in position, authority, and responsibility. However, the Eldership may elect to financially support this Elder, in obedience to Scripture (1 Tim 5:17-18; 1 Cor 9:14), thereby enabling him to “labour in preaching and teaching” (1 Tim 5:17). Doing so enables the teaching Elder to serve the congregation without having to give up “prayer and...the ministry of the word” in order to make a living (Acts 6:4).

**4.7.4** To select, appoint, and remove officers, staff, boards and committees of the Society; prescribe such duties for them consistent with the Scriptures, or applicable law, and fix the terms of their offices and compensation;

**4.7.5** To make disbursements from the funds and properties of the Society, or authorize such disbursement, as required to fulfill the purposes of Grace Bible Fellowship, according to the guidelines established in Article 8 of these Bylaws;

**4.7.6** To act on behalf of the church to purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property and to receive real and personal property by will, gift, as are required to fulfill the purposes of Grace Bible Fellowship, according to the guidelines established in Article 8 of these Bylaws;

**4.7.7** To borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purposes of Grace Bible Fellowship, according to the guidelines established in Article 8 of these Bylaws;

**4.7.8** To adopt, make, and use a corporate seal, and to alter the form of such seal from time to time as deemed appropriate.

**4.8 Place of Meetings** Any meeting of the Eldership, whether regular, or special, may be held at any place within or without the Province of Alberta.

**4.9 Regular Meetings** Regular meetings of the Board of Elders shall normally be held, without call or notice, on the first Sunday of each month unless otherwise modified by the Board. From time to time, regular meetings may be open to church members.

**4.10 Special Meetings** Special meetings of the Board of Elders may be called at any time by order of the Chairman or by a quorum of the Elders.

**4.11 Quorum** At all duly-called meetings of the Board of Elders, a majority of the Elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**4.12 Decisions of the Eldership** After prayerful consideration all decisions shall be reached by unanimous consensus of the Eldership. Within this process each Elder must exercise a spirit of humility, counting others more significant than themselves (Phil 2:3).

**4.13 Fees and Compensation** Elders may or may not receive compensation for their services. Salaries, remuneration and/or any other form of compensation for any given elder will rest solely at the discretion of the Eldership. However, no Elder receiving compensation, directly or indirectly, from Grace Bible Fellowship shall be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

**4.14 Removal of Elders** An Elder may be removed from the Eldership in any one of the following ways:

**4.14.1 Removal through Resignation** An Elder may resign at any time without prejudice, by giving written notice to the Eldership if he does so in an orderly fashion and for good reason. Any such resignation shall take effect at the date of the receipt of such notice or at any later time specified therein.

**4.14.2 Removal through Dereliction of Duty** In the event that an Elder becomes unable to perform their responsibilities (i.e., they have become unavailable, physically or mentally incapacitated, etc.), the Elder may be removed from office by the unanimous consensus of the remaining Eldership.

**4.14.3 Removal through Disciplinary Action** Any member, including other Elders, may bring concerns about an Elder to the attention of the Eldership. Any question concerning an Elder's qualifications or sins, however, will only be received for consideration with the testimony of two or three witnesses (1 Tim 5:19). After a thorough investigation by the Eldership, in accordance with the procedures prescribed by Scripture (Matt 18:15-17; 1 Tim 5:19), an Elder must be removed from office by the unanimous consensus of the remaining Eldership if he is found to be spiritually unqualified (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1

Pet 5:1-5). When an Elder is removed because of unrepentant sin the removal shall be accompanied by a public rebuke (1 Tim 5:20).

## **Article 5: Officers and Committees**

The officers of Grace Bible Fellowship shall be the Eldership, Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Eldership shall appoint all officers, staff, boards, and committees to accomplish specific objectives. All church officers, excluding Elders and Deacons, shall serve a one-year term. For the protection of the flock all appointees shall be members of good standing who are not under church discipline. The appointed officers, committees, and individuals shall serve in their respective capacities until their task is completed, or until such a time as they resign or are requested to step down by the Board of Elders.

**5.1 Chairman** The Eldership shall appoint a Chairman from among their number. The Chairman will call meetings, prepare agendas, and preside over all Eldership meetings as well as the Annual General Meeting and Special Congregational Meetings.

**5.2 Secretary** The Secretary shall attend, if possible, all meetings of the Eldership and congregation; shall keep, or cause to be kept: 1) A faithful and accurate record of the proceedings, the date, time, and purpose of all meetings in a special file for that purpose; 2) An accurate membership roll showing all the names and addresses of all the members of Grace Bible Fellowship; 3) A record of baptisms, marriages, certificates of ordination, licenses or commissions; 4) An account of any special events in the life of the church which are of historical significance. The records and minutes of all meetings are open to review by the Eldership at any time and shall be turned over to the Elders upon request.

**5.3 Treasurer** The Treasurer shall be a Deacon who is appointed to steward the physical and financial resources of the church, “so that no one should blame us about this generous gift that is being administered by us, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord's sight but also in the sight of man” (2 Cor 8:20-21). For this reason, the Treasurer shall 1) Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for, all the funds of the Society and deposit, or cause to be deposited all monies, funds, and valuables in the name of Grace Bible Fellowship in such depositories as designated by the Elders; 2) Receive and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church; 3) Disburse or cause to be disbursed the funds of the church as directed by the Elders and shall take proper vouchers of such disbursements; 4) Keep and maintain accurate records of the church's properties and business transactions including accounts of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital; 5) Prepare a monthly financial report for the Eldership; 6) Prepare and present an annual financial report at the Annual General Meeting; and 7) Submit annual reports as required by Canada Revenue Agency.

**5.4 Deacons** Deacons may be appointed to carry out specific ministries by the Eldership. This enables the Elders to focus on, and not be distracted from, their God-given calling (Acts 6:4). Deacons must fulfill the duties of their office in cooperation with, and in subjection to, the

Elders. The term and number of Deacons shall not be fixed. The Eldership shall set apart Deacons who evidence the scriptural qualifications for that office (Acts 6:1-7; 1 Tim. 3:8-13).

## **Article 6: Church Meetings**

**6.1 Annual General Meeting** An annual meeting of the church shall be held as soon as practical after the first (1<sup>st</sup>) of January each year but no later than the fifteenth (15<sup>th</sup>) of February. The business of the annual meeting shall include reports from various church ministries, a review of the annual financial statements and the proposed budget for the coming year, and a discussion of the church's vision and ministry for the upcoming year. These reports, including the proposed budget, shall be approved by a vote of the membership.

**6.2 Special Congregational Meetings** Congregational meetings may be called by the Elders or when one-fourth of the voting members make a written request for such a meeting. This request must state the reason for the meeting, be signed by one-fourth of the members in good standing, and be presented to the Elders, who shall in turn make the proper announcement of the meeting. Every meeting at which business is to be transacted shall be announced at least two weeks (14 days) prior to the meeting. Other meetings, at which no business is transacted, may be called at the discretion of the Elders without previous notice.

**6.3 Quorum** At all duly-called meetings of the members, whether regular or special, the members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

## **Article 7: Church Discipline**

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity (both doctrinal and moral) in the local church (1 Cor 5:1-8), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Tim 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling them to repentance and restoration (Gal 6:1). The members of Grace Bible Fellowship, as well as all others who regularly attend this congregation, who engage in conduct that violates Scripture, as determined by the Elders, shall be subject to church discipline, including but not limited to dismissal from the fellowship (Matt 18:15-17).

The members of Grace Bible Fellowship, 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 of individuals, or because of public statements to the congregation concerning individuals under church discipline.

Members who are under discipline by the church forfeit 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 disciplinary action.

## **Article 8: Settlement of Disputes**

In any dispute arising between Elders, church members, or staff pertaining to any matter of doctrine, practices, church finances, or title to property purchased with church contributions, the dispute shall be resolved by the Eldership (or a duly appointed Committee of the Board). 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 (Eph 4:1-3).

## **Article 9: Finances**

**9.1 Non-profit** The purposes of this church shall be carried on without financial gain for its members. Any profits or financial gains to this church shall be used in promoting the objectives outlined in this constitution. This congregation depends entirely on the prayers, personal services, and gifts of God's people.

**9.2 Reception of Funds** The church may receive all monies or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which the Religious Society was formed (as shown by the Declaration of Incorporation and these Bylaws). However, nothing contained herein shall require the Board of Elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind if it shall determine in its discretion that receipt of such money or property is contrary to the expressed purposes of the Religious Society.

**9.3 Disbursement of Funds** The church may 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 Religious Society.

**9.4 Fees, and Compensation** No part of the church's net earnings shall benefit or be distributed to its members, or other private persons, except that the church shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to fulfill the purposes of Grace Bible Fellowship. Any person(s) receiving compensation, directly or indirectly, from Grace Bible Fellowship shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of said compensation.

**9.5 Church Budget** Before the Annual General Meeting the Elders will prepare a budget of the proposed expenditures for the coming year. Once the budget is approved by the membership it will direct the utilization of church funds.

**9.6 Fiscal Year** The fiscal year of Grace Bible shall begin on the first (1<sup>st</sup>) day of January and end on the thirty-first (31<sup>st</sup>) day of December in each year.

**9.7 Dissolution** In the case of the dissolution of Grace Bible Fellowship the Board of Elders shall, after paying or making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all the



assets of the congregation. All assets shall be disposed of by gift or by sale to registered Canadian charities that are operated exclusively for religious purposes and sympathetic to the beliefs and aims of Grace Bible Fellowship.

## **Article 10: Amendments**

**10.1 Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws** This Constitution and Bylaws may be amended or rescinded by a three-fourths majority of church members present at a meeting called by the Eldership for this purpose. The proposed amendments, and the rationale thereof, must be submitted to the church membership two weeks (14 days) prior to the meeting by written announcement.

**10.2 Amendments of the Doctrinal Statement** The Doctrinal Statement of Grace Bible Fellowship may be amended for the sake of clarity. However, the essential content of said document is not subject to change or alteration. Amendments to the Doctrinal Statement must be adopted by a three-fourths majority of church members present at a meeting called by the Eldership for this purpose. The proposed amendments, and the rationale thereof, must be submitted to the church membership two weeks (14 days) prior to the meeting by written announcement.

**10.3 Record of Amendments** Whenever the Constitution and Bylaws or Doctrinal Statement, is rescinded or amended, or whenever a new Bylaw is added, it shall be dated, copied, and recorded in the minutes of the meeting along with the original document.

## **Article 11: Certificate**

We, the undersigned, hereby certify that the above Articles were adopted as the Bylaws of Grace Bible Fellowship by the Elders on January 21, 2018. We further certify that the above Bylaws were adopted by the members of the church in a regularly called meeting on January 21, 2018.

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David G. Atmore, Elder

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Jason Ewert, Elder/Secretary

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Donald J. Pryor, Elder/Chairman

