

RESTATED BYLAWS OF
GRACE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF FLORIDA, INC

NOTE: For purposes of these Restated Bylaws, the terms “Church” and “Corporation” may be used interchangeably.

ARTICLE I. NAME AND PRINCIPLE OFFICE

The name of the Corporation is GRACE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP OF FLORIDA, INC. This Corporation will sometimes be referred to in the Bylaws as the “Church”. The Church maintains its principal office at 901 Ridge Road SW. Largo FL. 33770. This Corporation is organized as a church exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law).

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall begin January 1st and end December 31st.

ARTICLE II. MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Grace Christian Fellowship is Repurposing Lives by God’s Refreshing Grace whereby we may achieve the greatest of all goals - the glorifying of God in all things. Grace Christian Fellowship exists in order to advance the Kingdom of God by worshipping God through the Gospel of Christ, by clearly teaching and practicing the Word of God, and by lovingly serving God’s people and the world around us. Therefore the Church is committed to:

- 1) Declare – Hebrews 1:3 declares Jesus Christ as the radiance of God's glory, the exact representation of His nature, and the One who made purification of sins. Therefore, praising Him is at the center of all we do when we gather together. Exalting our Lord through worshipful music, sacrificial giving, joyful fellowshiping, and faithful preaching is our highest expression of thanks and love towards the One Who saves us.
- 2) Disciple – The focus of every worship service, Bible study, youth meeting, and children’s class is the proclamation of God's matchless Word. It alone is the source of truth concerning the character of God, the nature of man, the way to salvation, and the hope of heaven. Declaring Scripture's truth is a great privilege and is never taken lightly.
- 3) Demonstrate – People who have been called away from the power and penalty of sin and who are now serving Jesus Christ and His church are the greatest testimony of God's reality and Gospel because their repurposed lives are empowered by His Spirit, which accomplishes His Kingdom work. We demonstrate by loving and serving one another – The Gospel brings life, freedom, and hope. In a lost and dying world that is in much need of the life-giving Gospel, lovingly serving one another and the world around us for the Gospel is our highest calling.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH, FIVE SOLAS AND COVENANT COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

This Church affirms the Holy Bible as the inspired Word of God, and as the only basis for our beliefs.

1) STATEMENT OF FAITH

a) THE HOLY SCRIPTURES:

We accept the Bible, including the 39 books of the Old Testament and the 27 books of the New Testament, as the written Word of God. The Bible is an essential and infallible record of God's self-disclosure to mankind. It leads us to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Being given by God, the Scriptures are both fully and verbally inspired by God. Therefore, as originally given, the Bible is free of error in all it teaches. Each book is to be interpreted according to its context and

purpose and in reverent obedience to the Lord who speaks through it in living power. All believers are exhorted to study the Scriptures and diligently apply them to their lives. The Scriptures are the authoritative and normative rule and guide of all Christian life, practice, and doctrine. They are totally sufficient and must not be added to, superseded, or changed by later tradition, extra-biblical revelation, or worldly wisdom. Every doctrinal formulation, whether of creed, confession, or theology, must be put to the test of the full counsel of God in Holy Scripture. Although the majority of the leadership and church uses the New International Version of the Bible, all legitimate translations of the Scriptures are acceptable and used.

2 Tim. 3:15-16; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; Ps. 19:7

b) THE ONE TRUE GOD:

The one true God has revealed Himself as the Eternal, Self-sufficient, Incomprehensible, Holy, and Sovereign God, who as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is three distinct persons yet one in substance.

Rev. 1:8; Acts 17:24-25; Isa. 55:8; 2 Chron. 20:6; Matt. 28:19

(1) GOD 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 from nothing. Through the same Word He daily sustains all His creatures. He rules over all and 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 man for fellowship with Himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of His glory.

*Luke 10:21-22; Matt. 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Rom. 1:7;
I Tim. 1:1-2; 2:5-6; I Peter 1:3; Rev. 1:6*

(2) GOD THE SON:

Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, was the eternal Word made flesh, supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary. He was and is perfect in nature, teaching, and obedience. He is fully God and fully man. He was always with God and is God. Through Him all things came into being and were created. He was before all things and in Him all things hold together by the power of His word. He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation, and in Him dwells the fullness of the godhead bodily. He is the only Savior for the sins of the world, having shed His blood and died a vicarious death on Calvary's cross. By His death in our place, He revealed the divine love and upheld divine justice, removing our guilt and reconciling us to God. Having redeemed us from sin, the third day He rose bodily from the grave, victorious over death and the powers of darkness and for a period of forty days appeared to over five hundred witnesses, 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. He is the Head of His body, the Church, and should be adored, loved, served, and obeyed by all.

*Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Rom. 9:5; 8:46;
II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matt. 20:28; Eph. 1:4; Acts 1:11;
Rom. 5:6-8; 6:9,10; Heb. 7:25; Heb. 9:28; I Tim. 3:16*

(3) GOD THE 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,

dwells within the regenerate, and empowers the believer for faithful service. 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 worshipped as God the Third Person of the Trinity.

*John 14:16,17,26; John 15:26,27; John 16:9-14;
Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Gal. 5:22-26*

c) THE FALL OF MAN AND HIS STATE:

Man was created good and in the image of God Almighty. But mankind, through the imputation of sin acquired from the first man Adam, is now self-seeking, wicked, idolatrous, dead in spirit, and a natural enemy of God. There is nothing in man that would desire a relationship or reconciliation with God the Father.

Gen. 1:26-31; Rom. 5:12-21; Rom. 3: 10-18; Eph. 2:1; Jer. 17:9; Rom. 8:7

d) THE WAY OF SALVATION:

(1) THE GOSPEL:

Jesus Christ is the Gospel. The Good News is revealed in His birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension. Christ's crucifixion is the heart of the Gospel, His resurrection is the power of the Gospel, and His ascension is the glory of the Gospel. Christ's death is a substitutionary and propitiatory sacrifice to God for our sins. It satisfies the demands of God's holy justice and appeases His holy wrath. It also demonstrates His mysterious love and reveals His amazing grace. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men can be saved. At the heart of all sound doctrine is the cross of Jesus Christ and the infinite privilege that redeemed sinners have of glorifying God because of what He has accomplished. Therefore, this Gospel of grace is to be sincerely preached to all men in all nations. And we want all that takes place in our hearts, churches, and ministries to proceed from, and be related to the cross.

Rom. 10:9; 1 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rom. 3:21-26; Rom. 5:9

(2) REPENTANCE AND FAITH:

Man's response to the Gospel is rooted and grounded in the free and unconditional election of God for His own pleasure and glory. It is also true that the message of the Gospel is only effectual to those who genuinely repent of their sins and, by God's grace, put saving faith in Christ. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or 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 Christ's disciple. It must also be recognized that since fallen man is incapable of repenting and expressing trusting faith in his own strength, repentance and faith are gifts from God.

*Luke 13:3-5; 1 Thess. 1:9; Eph. 2:8-10; Is. 55:6-7; 2Cor. 7:9-10;
Matt. 11:28-30; John 3:16; Acts 20:21; Heb. 6:1; 2Pet. 3:9; Eph. 5*

e) THE SALVATION OF MAN:

Since man is totally depraved, incapable, and not desiring to be saved, man's salvation is completely dependent on the Mercy and Grace of God through Faith and Trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Salvation is a gift from God so no man can merit or earn his salvation through heritage, religious affiliation, or good works. This salvation is divinely imputed by the Holy Spirit, who brings spiritual life to man's dead spirit by the usual means of the preaching of the Word of God and most importantly, by God's Eternal Election and Decrees. Since this salvation is all a work of Grace, a true believer can be secure that the Lord will keep them in

the faith. As a Just and Holy God, the Father has the divine right to dispense His Justice and Mercy on whomever He chooses according to His good and sovereign purposes. Salvation is by Grace alone – through faith alone – in Christ alone.

*Rom. 3:10-18; Rom 8:29-30; Rom. 9:15-33; Rom. 10:10-15;
Rom. 12:3; Eph.2:4-10; John 10:28; Phil.1:6*

f) **SANCTIFICATION:**

The Scriptures teach that a life of holiness is necessary and a sign of one's salvation. The Holy Spirit is the active agent in this sanctification and seeks to produce his fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though indwelling sin remains a reality within man's unredeemed flesh, as we are led by the Spirit we are to "crucify the misdeeds of the flesh." We do so as we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keeping His commandments and endeavoring to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is 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. The spiritual disciplines, especially Bible study, prayer, worship, and confession, are a vital means of grace in this regard. Nevertheless, the believer's ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve his people until the end, which is most certain.

*Heb. 12:14; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; 1 John 2:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21;
Rom. 6:6; 6:11-13; 8:13; Gal. 2:20*

g) **EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT:**

In addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his spiritual gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. These fillings can begin at the point of regeneration but are often experienced as one grows in their walk with the Lord and are ultimately contingent on God's sovereign grace.

Luke 24: 49; Acts 1: 4-8; 2:1-21; 10:44-48; 1 Cor. 12 - 14

h) **THE HARMONY OF LAW AND GOSPEL:**

The Law of God is nothing less than an expression of God's holy and moral character. In this sense the Law of God is eternal, just as He is eternal. Thus God's eternal law has normally been referred to as His Moral Law. Though God has given His Law in various forms throughout the stages of redemptive history, it is the Moral Law that has always been the foundation and basis of God's Law. Christ lived a perfect law-abiding life and fulfilled the requirements of God's law that we in our sinfulness and rebellion could not. It is this very law-abiding righteousness that is imputed to those who trust in the redemptive work of Christ.

- (1) Though Christ fulfilled the requirements of the law on behalf of the elect, the Christian life is not without external laws. Jesus taught many moral principles and explained how his teachings were the true application of the Law (specifically the Mosaic Law). Following the example and teachings of Christ and also that of the Apostles, we too must discern the moral principles taught throughout the Scriptures and apply them carefully to the church and world of our day.

Ex. 20:1-17; Ps. 115:3; Matt. 5:17-20; Rom. 7:7-25; Gal. 3:23-29

i) **THE CHURCH:**

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine

appointments for the fulfillment of the great commission. Each believer is an integral part of the Church and should be encouraged and trained to flow in their giftings so that the Church will function in a healthy and fruitful manner. The Lord has divinely called and scripturally ordained leadership to teach, guide, correct, train, and prepare the Church for works of service.

- (1) God by his Word and Spirit creates the Church, calling sinful men out of the whole human race into the fellowship of Christ's Body. By the same Word and Spirit, He guides and preserves that new redeemed humanity. The Church is not a religious institution or denomination; rather, the Church Universal is made up of those who have become genuine followers of Jesus Christ and have personally appropriated the Gospel. The Church exists to worship and glorify God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It also exists to serve Him by faithfully doing His will in the earth. This involves a commitment to see the gospel preached and churches planted throughout the entire world for a testimony. The ultimate mission of the Church is the making of disciples through the preaching of the gospel. Upon conversion, newly redeemed men and women are added to a local church in which they devote themselves to teaching, fellowship, the Lord's Supper, and prayer.
- (2) All Covenant Community Members of the Church Universal are to be a vital and committed part of a local church. In this context they are called to walk out the New Covenant as the people of God and demonstrate the reality of the kingdom of God. The ascended Christ has called and gifted men as pastors/teachers for the equipping of Christ's body that it might mature and grow. Women play a vital role in the life of the church, but in keeping with God's created design they are not permitted "to have authority over a man" (1 Tim. 2:12). Therefore, eldership within the church is male. In the context of the local church, God's people receive pastoral care and leadership and the opportunity to employ their God-given gifts in His service in relation to one another and to the world.

Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 2:22; Heb. 12:23; Eph. 4:11-13; Heb. 10:25

j) THE SACRAMENTS:

A sacrament is a visible sign of God's promise of grace to believers. We believe that the Lord has left us with two such sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. They are not to be empty rituals and they do not automatically convey the things that they signify, but they have been ordained by Christ and designed to signify, instruct, and seal the believers who receive them in faith. They are a vital part of the worship of God and the nurturing of the Christian life.

- (1) BAPTISM:
Water baptism is only intended for the individual who has received the saving benefits of Christ's redemptive work. Therefore, in obedience to Christ's command and as a testimony to God, the Church, oneself, and the world, a believer should be immersed in water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Water baptism is a visual demonstration of a person's union with Christ in the likeness of his death and resurrection. It signifies that his former way of life has been put to death and vividly depicts a person's release from the mastery of sin. For Grace Christian Fellowship's position on infant baptism, please refer to the Positional Paper on Covenant Placement found elsewhere in this document.

Col 2:11-15; Acts 2:38-39; 16:31-34; Matt. 28:19

- (2) THE LORD'S SUPPER:
As with water baptism, the Lord's Supper (or Communion) is to be observed only by those who have become genuine followers of Christ. The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements of bread and the fruit of the vine, is the sacrament expressing our covenant relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as we remember His suffering and death and

enjoy a special presence of Christ and His Grace. It also serves the church as a reminder of His second coming. The elements are to be received with an attitude of faith and self-examination. It is to be celebrated by believers as often as possible until the day when the Lord Jesus finally celebrates His Supper with us at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb.

Matt. 26:17-30; Cor. 11:23-32

k) MISSIONS:

We believe that God has given the church a great commission to make disciples of all nations – internationally, domestically, and locally – so that there might be a great and faithful multitude from every nation, tribe, ethnic, and language group who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-48; John 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:20

l) HEAVEN AND HELL:

The Scriptures plainly teach that those who are redeemed and of the Elect will one day, either by physical death or by spiritual translation, be changed and resurrected to a completely new dimension of life and will spend eternity in the glorious presence of the Lord. This is all the result of God's Gracious Mercy towards His children through Christ. The devil, his angels, and anyone else not redeemed or whose name is not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, shall be consigned to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire (Hell, Gehenna, Second Death). This is all the result of God's Holy and Perfect Justice.

1 Thess. 4:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:2-58; Rom. 8:23; John 3:16

m) THE CONSUMMATION:

The Consummation of all things includes the 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 are finally separated from the benevolent presence of God, enduring eternal punishment, but the righteous, in glorious bodies, shall live and reign with him forever. Married to Christ as his Bride, the Church will be in the presence of God forever, serving Him and giving Him unending praise and glory. Then shall the eager expectation of creation be fulfilled and the whole earth shall proclaim the glory of God who makes all things new.

*Matt. 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Phil. 3:20; I Thess. 4:15;
II Tim. 4:1; Tit. 2:13; I Cor. 4:5; I Cor. 15; II Thess. 1:7-10; Rev. 20:4-6,11-15*

2) THE FIVE SOLAS

The bedrock underpinning of our Christian worldview at Grace Christian Fellowship is the four-fold foundation of the Authority of God's Word, the Sovereignty of God, the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the belief in the Trinity. The walls of our Christian doctrinal stance are what have been historically referred to as the Five Solas of the Reformation. They are as follows:

a) SOLA SCRIPTURA (Scripture Alone)

We affirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

We deny that any creed, council, or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

b) SOLUS CHRISTUS (Christ Alone)

We affirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited (Hebrews 9:11-28).

c) SOLA GRATIA (Grace Alone)

We affirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques, or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerate human nature, but comes through this gift of grace (Ephesians 2:8-9).

d) SOLA FIDE (Faith Alone)

We affirm that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification, Christ's law-abiding righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice. It is by grace that we have been enabled by God's Spirit to trust in Christ's life, death, and resurrection for our salvation.

We deny that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, and we deny that a person is justified through any combination of faith and human effort (Romans 3:28).

e) SOLI DEO GLORIA (Glory to God Alone)

We affirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God, and for his glory alone.

We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem, or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel (1 Corinthians 10:31; 1 Peter 4:11).

*(Adapted from the "The Cambridge Declaration" – a doctrinal statement
by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals)*

3) CHURCH COVENANT COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS

- As a covenant community member of Grace Christian Fellowship, and in desiring to bring unity and strength to this local body of Christ, I joyfully agree to walk together with my church family and enter into a biblically-based covenant with them by making the following commitments:
- I will rejoice in the grace of God, privately and corporately giving thanks to our heavenly Father for the sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of our sins, and for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to believe and live for the glory of God.

- I will seek to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
- I will seek to advance the proclamation of the Gospel through the relationships God has given me in my family, workplace, and community. I will seek to advance the proclamation of the Gospel in foreign territories as the Lord would lead and enable me to.
- I will devote myself to the study of the Scriptures and to prayer both privately and corporately.
- I will not neglect meeting together in corporate worship.
- I will live together with my brothers and sisters in love, just as God has loved us. I will seek their good through forming relationships that promote Godwardness, holiness, discipleship, worship, and sound doctrine.
- I will, as God so enables me, care for my brothers and sisters who are sick, in distress or in poverty.
- I will seek to serve the church's ministries, not only through the regular giving of my finances, but also by the giving of my time and effort.
- I will promote marriage as a reflection of Christ's relationship with His church and bring any children God may give me in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. I support the church's understanding of human sexuality, family relationships, and divorce and remarriage.
- I will pursue reconciliation when offense occurs between me and another Covenant Community Member of the church. I will reject all opportunities to speak or to hear gossip or slander. I agree that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church or its pastors, elders, deacons, officers, board members, employees, or agents of the church to resolve personal disputes.
- I will, in the spirit of church unity, joyfully submit to the church's leadership, bring my theological and biblical concerns to them, and commit myself to regularly pray for them.
- I agree with the church's doctrine and practice of church discipline and restoration.
- I accept Grace Christian Fellowship's Statement of Faith and Position Papers as the theological foundation for this church and am willing to be spiritually led and taught by these theological distinctions.
- I will, if I move from this place, unite with some other church where I can carry out the spirit of these commitments and teaching of God's Word.

ARTICLE IV. AUTHORITY OF STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the foregoing Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible and, therefore, is binding upon all Covenant Community Members.

ARTICLE V. AFFILIATION

This Church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of any denominational

control.

ARTICLE VI. CHURCH ORDINANCES

1) Baptism

- a) The Pastor or Associate Pastor, after counseling with the candidate, will determine if the candidate is fully prepared to participate in the ordinance of Baptism.
- b) Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor, or Associate Pastor.
- c) Baptism shall be by immersion only, unless there are physical limitations of the baptismal candidate.
- d) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any service prescribed by the Pastor.

2) Lord's Supper

- a) The observance of the Lord's Supper shall be at the end of each church service or as prescribed the Senior Pastor.
- b) Covenant Community Members of the Church and all who know Christ as their Savior are invited to join in observing the Lord's Supper.

ARTICLE VII. COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

1) QUALIFICATIONS FOR COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

If you love Jesus and feel called to make Grace Christian Fellowship your home church, then we invite you to join our covenant community. When you commit with us you agree, by God's grace and Spirit, to:

- Live according to our Covenant Community Commitments.
- Read and abide by the bylaws and position papers posted on the church website
- Listen to the Vision Series recordings posted on the website
- Actively participate in the life of the church family through:
 - Church attendance
 - Financial support
 - Volunteering and serving
 - Participating in various bible studies and activities as you are able.

When you do these things, you are showing evidence of your commitment to this local body with the blessing and privileges it affords as being a member of a local church family.

Our covenant promise is to help you along in your spiritual journey and to work together in living out the mission of Grace Christian Fellowship and its vision of "Repurposing Lives by Sharing God's Refreshing Grace".

2) RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF A COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBER

On becoming a Covenant Community Member of this church, in addition to and accordance with the Covenant Commitments contained in Article III, Section 3, each further covenants to love, honor, and esteem the Senior Pastor, elders, and deacons; to pray for them; to recognize their authority in the spiritual affairs of the church; to regularly attend services; to cherish a brotherly love for all Covenant Community Members of the church; to support the church in prayer, offerings, and with other financial support as the Lord enables; and in accordance with biblical commands, to affirm through a Christian lifestyle the beliefs and practices of the church.

3) PRIVILEGES OF COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

Covenant Community Members of Grace Christian Fellowship receive care from the church leadership; are given the opportunity to better understand and to be a part of the mission and vision of Grace Christian Fellowship; receive identification in a localized body of Christ; receive spiritual instruction and accountability; and are provided with a framework for discipleship and spiritual growth; and Covenant Community Members are also given the opportunity to serve within the body of Christ.

3) LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS OF COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

Covenant Community Members may not vote to initiate any church action, rather to confirm the direction of the church as determined by the Elders and Church Board.

Covenant Community Membership in this church does not afford the Covenant Community Members with any property, contractual, or civil rights based on principles of democratic government. Although the general public is invited to all of the church's worship services, the church property remains private property. The pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Elders) has the authority to suspend or revoke the right of any person, including a Covenant Community Member, to enter or remain on church property. If after being notified of such a suspension or revocation, the person enters or remains on church property, the person may, in the discretion of the pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the elders and Board of Trustees), be treated as a trespasser.

4) DISCIPLINE AND RESTORATION OR REMOVAL/TERMINATION OF A COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBER

Covenant Community Members are expected to demonstrate special love, loyalty, and concern for one another. When a Covenant Community Member becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and testimony, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother (Matthew 18:15-17).

Before he goes, he should first examine himself. When he goes, he should go with a spirit of humility and have the goal of restoration (Galatians 6:1).

If restoration is not reached, a second Covenant Community Member, not necessarily an elder or the pastor, is to join the restoration process to resolve the matter (Matthew 18:15-17). This second step should also be preceded by self-examination and exercised in a spirit of humility with the goal of restoration.

If the matter is still unresolved after the preceding steps have been taken, a Restoration Committee shall hear the matter.

A Restoration Committee will consist of The Senior Pastor (or another pastor designated by the elders), and two other church leaders (designated by the elders). This committee shall have sole authority in determining heretical deviations from the Statement of Faith and violations of the Covenant Community Commitments and caring for the individual with the purpose of repentance and restoration. If the pastor or an elder is the subject of a

disciplinary matter, he shall not sit as a Member of the discipline committee. The pastor and elders shall be entitled to the same steps as other Covenant Community Members and be subject to the same discipline.

If the matter is still unresolved after the first three steps outlined have been taken, such Covenant Community Members who refuse to repent and be restored are to be removed from the Covenant Community Membership of the church and may not serve in any capacity within the church.

No matter may be heard by the Restoration Committee or the church unless the preceding steps outlined have been taken, except in the case of a severe and public offense (which will be determined by the elders).

If an unrepentant offending party is removed from the Covenant Community Membership, all contact with him from that point forward (except by family members) is to be for the sake of restoration.

The procedures provided in this section are based on Matt. 18:15-20; Rom. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 2 Cor. 2:1-11; Gal. 6:1; 1 Thess. 5:14; 2 Thess. 3:6, 10-15; 1 Tim. 5:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

Covenant Community Membership shall also be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- Death.
- Transfer of Covenant Community Membership to another church.
- A request in writing by the Covenant Community Member.

5) TRANSFER OF COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP

Covenant Community Members, not under the discipline and restoration process, may request a letter of transfer to be sent to another church.

ARTICLE VIII. COVENANT COMMUNITY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

1) MEETINGS FOR WORSHIP

Unless otherwise determined by the Senior Pastor and the other Elders, the church shall meet each Sunday morning for public worship and at least once during the week for Bible study and prayer. Except when circumstances forbid it, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper shall be observed every Sunday morning.

2) ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The annual church business meeting shall be held during the first trimester of the year at which time the regular church administration shall be considered.

The moderator, established by the Senior Pastor, shall determine the rules of procedure according to his sense of fairness and common sense, giving all Covenant Community Members a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a matter. The moderator is the final authority on questions of procedure, and his decision is final and controlling.

3) SPECIAL MEETINGS

The Senior Pastor (or in his absence, an individual designated by the Elders) may call a special meeting by giving notice of such a meeting and the purpose for which it is called to the church from the pulpit at least one Sunday and not less than one week prior to said meeting. A meeting for the calling of a Senior Pastor or the severance of the relationship between the church and Senior Pastor shall be called in accordance to the bylaws.

Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and special services may be held as the Elders deem beneficial.

4) PLACE

Meetings of Covenant Community Members shall be held in the Sanctuary of the Church, unless the notice of the meeting designates a different location.

5) NOTICE

Whenever Covenant Community Members are requested to take any action at a meeting, notice shall be given to Covenant Community Members no less than eight (8) days prior to a meeting. Notification of Covenant Community Membership meetings shall be given in any of the following manners, which shall be deemed to be a reasonable method of calling a Covenant Community Membership meeting:

- Listed in a Printed or Digital Notice to the congregation in attendance at a regular Sunday service;
- Oral announcement to the congregation at a Sunday service; or
- Posted on the Church website or The City.

ARTICLE IX. CHURCH BOARD, OFFICERS, ELDERS, DEACONS/DEACONESS AND STAFF

1) GENERAL

This Church functions not as a democracy, but as a body under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and the direction of the Senior Pastor with the Church Board for business and legal matters and Elders, as the under-shepherds, for spiritual matters. Determinations of the affairs of this church are ecclesiastical matters and shall be determined exclusively by the church's own rules and procedures. The deacons shall give counsel and assistance to the Elders as requested by them. (Our view on church polity and leadership are based on passages such as Acts 6, 1 Timothy 3, and Titus 1.)

2) CORPORATE OFFICERS

The corporate officers consist of a President (Senior Pastor), a Vice President, a Secretary (Church Administrator), and a Treasurer. These corporation officers shall also be known as the Trustees of the Church. This dual designation will serve to overcome occasional difficulties where documents require the signature of Church Trustees.

Appointment

The Senior Pastor, with the assistance and input of the elders, as he deems appropriate, will appoint church officers. The candidate for said office will then be presented for affirmation by the Covenant Community Membership in the same way that a new Covenant Community Member is subject to the affirmation of church Covenant Community Members.

3) CHURCH BOARD

The Senior Pastor will act as Chairman of the Board. In addition to the four Church Board Officers, there will also be a minimum of three but no more than five additional directors appointed to the board. The duty of the board is to convene a minimum of once per quarter to handle the business affairs of the church and to take action on recommendations of the Financial Committee. The annual meeting of the board shall take place no later than 90 days after the close of the fiscal year. Any decision that requires a vote shall require the approval of the

majority to pass.

Appointment

The Senior Pastor, with the assistance and input of the elders, as he deems appropriate, will appoint church officers. The candidate for said office will then be presented for affirmation by the Covenant Community Membership in the same way that a new Covenant Community Member is subject to the affirmation of church Covenant Community Members.

4) ELDERS

In order to assist the Senior Pastor, as under-shepherds, a minimum of four but no more than six additional elders (one must be the associate pastor) shall be appointed. The Senior Pastor shall be the Lead Elder. The duty of the Elders is listed under Article IX & X. The elders shall convene a minimum of once per quarter to handle the spiritual affairs of the church. The annual meeting of the Elders shall take place no later than 90 days after the close of the fiscal year. Any decision that requires a vote shall require the approval of the majority to pass.

Appointment

The Senior Pastor, with the assistance and input of the current elders, as he deems appropriate, will appoint new elders. The Associate Pastor must fill one elder position. The candidate for said office will then be presented for affirmation by the Covenant Community Membership in the same way that a new Covenant Community Member is subject to the affirmation of church Covenant Community Members.

5) DEACONS/DEACONESS

In order to assist the Senior Pastor and Elders, Deacon/Deaconesses shall be appointed assist the pastors in carrying out the ministries of the church.

Appointment

The Senior Pastor, with the assistance and input of the elders, as he deems appropriate, will appoint deacons/deaconesses.

6) ELIGIBILITY FOR OFFICE

The church shall not install or retain an officer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith and the Covenant Community Commitments. All church officers, upon request of the Senior Pastor, shall affirm their agreement with the Statement of Faith and the Covenant Community Commitments.

Only Covenant Community Members are eligible for appointment to any church office or position.

7) TERMS OF OFFICE

a) President (Senior Pastor)

The relationship between the Senior Pastor (President) and the church shall be permanent unless dissolved at the option of either party by the giving of a month's notice, or less by mutual consent. The office of the Senior Pastor shall be terminated only if he deviates from the Statement of Faith

and/or the Covenant Community Commitments and is unrepentant. Some deviations may not allow for non termination, even when repentant. These deviations will be determined by two-thirds (2/3) of the Church Board and two-thirds (2/3) of the Elders. The termination of the relationship between the Senior Pastor and the church may be considered at any special church board meeting called for that purpose. The meeting may be called only upon the recommendation of two-thirds (2/3) of the Church Board and two-thirds (2/3) of the Elders. The moderator of this meeting shall be the vice president of the board. The vote to declare the office of Senior Pastor terminated shall be by written ballot with three-fourths (3/4) affirmative vote of those present. This vote must be confirmed with three-fourths (3/4) majority of the eligible Covenant Community Members present and voting at a special called church meeting. Disciplinary removal of the Senior Pastor from office automatically terminates his Covenant Community Membership. A restoration to Covenant Community Membership after disciplinary removal will be subject to the requirements of the by laws.

b) REMAINING CHURCH OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS AND ELDERS

All church officers, board members and elders must be affirmed initially and thereafter at the annual meeting of the board for church officers or board members or the annual meeting of the elders for elders by the Senior Pastor in order for them to commence, continue, or resign their offices(s). Should a non-disciplinary issue arise with any church officer, board member or elder prior to the next annual meeting, the Senior Pastor may ask for their resignation and remove them from their said position. He may seek the assistance and input of the elders, as he deems appropriate.

The Senior Pastor and elders will prayerfully oversee the filling of a church office vacancy - other than the office of Senior Pastor. The candidate for said office will then be presented for affirmation by the Covenant Community Membership.

The Senior Pastor may not remove an officer, board member and/or elder if the Senior Pastor is under a disciplinary removal procedure or in violation of the Statement of Faith and/or the Covenant Community Commitments and is unrepentant.

c) CHURCH STAFF

Subject to the affirmation of the Covenant Community Membership and on the condition that they are a Covenant Community Member of the church upon assuming their duties, the Senior Pastor may hire associates and assistants to assist the pastor in carrying out his God-given responsibilities.

The Senior Pastor and elders, with the fiscal input of the Church Board, will prayerfully oversee the filling of a church staff vacancy. The candidate for said office will then be presented to be affirmed by the church Covenant Community Membership.

All church staff, whether paid or volunteer, shall be under the supervision of the Senior Pastor with the assistance of and the Personnel Committee in regards to paid positions or his appointed designee.

The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer who fails to adhere to or expresses disagreement with the Statement of Faith or the Covenant Community Commitments, which would include one's neglect of his or her job responsibilities.

ARTICLE X. CHURCH LEADERSHIP DUTIES AND POWERS

1) SENIOR PASTOR

Duties of the Senior Pastor:

The Senior Pastor is responsible for leading the Church in accordance with the Statement of Faith and Covenant Community Commitments. He shall preside or appoint another pastor to preside in his place at all meetings and worship services of the Church. The Senior Pastor shall lead the congregation, the committees, the ministries, and the Church staff to properly perform their tasks.

The Senior Pastor is to preach the Gospel regularly and shall be at liberty to preach the whole counsel of the Word of God as the Lord leads him. He shall administer the ordinances of the church, act as moderator at all church meetings for the transaction of church matters, supervise the teaching ministries of the church, and tenderly watch over the spiritual interests of the Covenant Community Membership.

The Senior Pastor serves as the president of the corporation. He, or his appointed designee, will publicly inform all newly appointed officers of the particular function and the responsibilities of their respective offices. He shall extend the right hand of fellowship to all new Covenant Community Members on behalf of the church and perform such other duties as generally appertain to such a position. The Senior Pastor is free to choose the means and methods by which he exercises the ministry that God has given him so long as he functions in accordance with the Statement of Faith and Covenant Community Commitments.

All appointments for public worship and Bible study and the arrangements thereof, including time and place and the use of the property belonging to the church for purposes other than the stated appointments, will be under the control of the Senior Pastor or his appointed designee.

The Senior Pastor will also act as moderator in all matters for transaction of business. In the event the Senior Pastor is involved in the subject matter to be discussed, or in the absence of the Senior Pastor, the Vice President shall preside in his place. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all organizations and committees and his leadership shall be recognized in all of them.

Election of Senior Pastor:

Should the position of Senior Pastor become vacant, the Associated Pastor will automatically, without church board or elder vote, or covenant membership confirmation, assume the responsibilities of the position of Senior Pastor and immediately receive a compensation package designed by the personnel committee and approved by the board that is commiserate with tenure, experience, church size, and competitive in the market. This compensation package must meet the minimum salary and benefit package outlined in the board approved Senior Pastor Job Description. After the Associate Pastor has transitioned to the Senior Pastor position, Addendum A will automatically and immediately be instituted without further board and elder approval to establish the process for any future replacements of the Senior Pastor.

Should the Associate Pastor not wish to permanently fill that position, a Search Committee shall seek out a suitable replacement. The committee shall be comprised of the Elders and the members the Church Board and one at-large Covenant Community Member. The at large Covenant Community Member shall be nominated by the Elders and voted by the Church Board at a special called business meeting. The committee members appointed by their held position may begin work on a nomination before the one at large Covenant Community Member is voted on by the Church Board. The recommendation of the Search Committee shall constitute a nomination and the committee shall bring, for consideration to the Church Board and Elders.

The confirmation of a replacement Senior Pastor shall take place at a special business meeting of the

Covenant Community Members called for that purpose of confirmation as set forth in these Restated Bylaws.

2) PASTORAL AND LEADERSHIP STAFF

The pastoral and leadership staff shall be called and employed by the Senior Pastor, with the advice of the elders. Job descriptions shall be written when the need for a staff member is determined. When a pastoral and/or leadership staff position is to be established or filled, the individual who will be supervising the position will work in tandem with the Senior Pastor and the Personnel Committee to hire the vacancy.

a) CHURCH ELDER:

Grace Christian Fellowship is spiritually led by a plurality of Elders with a Senior Pastor who functions as the President of the church with the accountability and counsel of the other Elders. Elders devote themselves to the ministry of the Word, prayer, and spiritual care. In doing so, the elders are to graze the flock on the Word, guard the flock from false teaching, and guide the flock on their homeward journey.

- Ministry of the Word. Elders are quite literally deacons of the Word. This is the central responsibility of elders, and it is absolutely central to the life and growth of the church. Elders are to lead God's people by teaching God's Word. This teaching must be by the public handling of God's Word, the private counsel of biblical principles, and by an exemplary lifestyle that others may imitate.
- Prayer – Elders are also to devote themselves to prayer, both for themselves and on behalf of the whole congregation. Prayer not only counts as elder work, it is essential to the elder's work.
- Spiritual Care – Elders are to also care for the spiritual needs of the congregation by visiting the sick, serving the homebound, ministering to the imprisoned and oppressed, etc.
- Vision of the Church – Elders have the responsibility of imparting and implementing the vision of the church.
- Elders also assume the responsibility of:
Over-seeing all spiritual aspects of the church including assisting the Senior Pastor on appointing church leadership in the various ministry areas, and the operation of worship services.

b) ASSOCIATE PASTOR

Under the direction and guidance of the Senior Pastor, the Associate Pastor of the church shall assist the Senior Pastor in carrying out the vision and ministries of the church. At no time shall there be more than one Associate Pastor on staff. Any additional pastors hired shall be classified as Assistant Pastors.

c) LAY ELDER

Under the direction and guidance of the Senior Pastor, the lay elder of the church shall assist the pastor in carrying out the vision and ministries of the church.

d) DEACONS/DEACONESS

Assist the Senior Pastor and Elders in carrying out the ministries of the church. These duties are to be determined by the Senior Pastor, with the guidance of the Elders.

e) THE CHURCH TREASURER

The Treasurer shall ensure the stewardship of the physical and financial resources of the Corporation, “taking precaution that no one should discredit us in our administration...for we have regard for what is honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men” (2 Corinthians 8:20-21). The Church Treasurer, as a member of the Church Board, shall oversee and/or appoint a designee to the following:

- 1) Have charge and custody of, and be responsible for all funds of the corporation
- 2) Disburse, or cause to be disbursed, the funds of the church as may be directed by the budget adopted by the Church Board, taking proper vouchers for the disbursements
- 3) Keep and maintain adequate and correct accounts of the church’s properties and business transactions including account of its assets, liabilities, receipts, disbursements, and capital
- 4) When and as requested, render to the Elders and the Church Board accounts of all his transactions as minister of finance and of the financial condition of the church
- 5) Present a report for the year at the annual church business meeting
- 6) See to it that all church financial records are kept at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office
- 7) Chair the Finance Committee

f) THE CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR

Under the direction of the Church Treasurer and Church Board and as the Secretary of the Corporation, the Church Administrator shall see to it that the following duties, among others, are carried out:

- 1) To assist and work with the Church Treasurer by taking care of the day-to-day business of the church
- 2) Receive, and give receipt for all contributions, gifts, and donations to the church
- 3) Make all expenditures of the church (except miscellaneous petty cash disbursements) by check
- 4) Sign, certify, or attest documents as may be required by law
- 5) Be custodian of the records of the church
- 6) See that the reports, statements, certificates, and all other documents and records required by law are properly kept and filed
- 7) Certify and keep at the office of the church the original bylaws or a copy, including all amendments or alterations to the bylaws
- 8) Will take the minutes of the Financial Committee meetings and the minutes of any Covenant Community Member meetings (such as the Church Business Meeting or other meetings).
- 9) Keep all records at the office of the church and deliver them to any successor upon leaving office

g) COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEES

The Senior Pastor (or the Elders if the office of Senior Pastor is vacant) may appoint standing committees and designate a chairperson for each standing committee for ministry events and/or projects.

1) FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

The Church Treasurer and Church Administrator, along with three non-officer board members

shall constitute the Financial Committee. Only the Financial Committee shall perform the following duties and report to the Church Board its recommendations for approval:

- To set and oversee staff salaries and benefits, through the recommendations of the Personnel Committee
- To establish and oversee the church budget
- To purchase, hold, lease, or otherwise acquire real and personal property on behalf of the church, and to take real and personal property by will, gift, or bequest on behalf of the church
- To sell, convey, alienate, transfer, lease, assign, exchange, or otherwise dispose of, and to mortgage, pledge, or otherwise encumber the real and personal property of the church, to borrow money and incur indebtedness for the purpose and the use of the church; to cause to be executed, issued, and delivered for the indebtedness, in the name of the church, promissory notes, bonds, debentures, or other evidence of indebtedness; and to secure repayment by deeds of trust, mortgages, or pledges
- To function as the Indemnification Committee and to purchase and to oversee liability insurance
- To exercise all powers necessary for the dissolution of the church corporation if such action is mandated by the Church Officers
- Appoint Sub Committees to assist in the ministry of The Financial Committee responsibilities
 - Personnel Committee - The Personnel Committee is a sub committee of the Finance Committee and is to assist the Church in matters related to employed personnel administration. Its work includes such areas as determining staff needs, employment, salaries, benefits, and personnel job descriptions for the church staff and related ministry staff. The Personnel Committee is responsible to develop and implement to a set of personnel policies and procedures for the Church's and all of its ministries' employees.

SPECIAL COMMITTEES

The Church Board, in its discretion, may create special committees to provide the board with advice and information regarding matters submitted to the committee by the board for consideration. The committee shall have no authority to act on behalf of the corporation. The members of the committee shall be chosen by a majority vote of the Church Board and shall serve solely at the pleasure of the Church Board. The special committee shall be subject to the control and direction of the Church Board at all times.

ARTICLE XI. MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

1) PURPOSE

The church believes that it is to provide its Covenant Community Members and their children with an education which is based upon and consistent with Biblical teachings. The church believes that the home and church are responsible before God for providing a Christian education. To this end, the church shall engage in ministries in education in keeping with the following dictates.

2) CHURCH PARTICIPATION

All educational programs or courses of instruction formulated and offered by the church shall be primarily for the benefit of the Covenant Community Members of the church; however, the pastors may permit non-church Covenant Community Members to participate in church educational programs or courses of instruction if he deems it in the best interest of the church.

3) STAFF AND VOLUNTEER MEMBERSHIP

All instructors, teachers, and administrators shall be Covenant Community Members of this church. This provision shall not apply to visiting missionaries, evangelists, or preachers engaged for the purpose of delivering sermons or other special meetings on a temporary basis.

4) STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT COMMUNITY COMMITMENTS ACCORD

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be taught and presented in full accord with the Statement of Faith and the Covenant Community Commitments. The church shall not hire, appoint, or retain any employee or volunteer for its educational programs that fail to adhere to the Statement of Faith and the Covenant Community Commitments.

5) UNITY

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted as an integral and inseparable ministry of the church.

6) TEACHING

All educational programs or courses of instruction shall be conducted consistent with the teaching of the inerrant Word of God and as directed by the Senior Pastor, or his appointed designee. It is the responsibility of every instructor or teacher to present the inerrant Word of God as the sole infallible source of knowledge and wisdom.

7) CHRISTIAN WALK

All administrators, instructors, teachers, and volunteers shall continue or adopt a lifestyle consistent with the precepts which they teach, whether in or out of the classroom.

ARTICLE XII. LICENSE AND ORDINATION

1) LICENSE AND ORDINATION QUALIFICATIONS

Any male Covenant Community Member of this church or its mission churches, who gives evidence of a genuine call of God into the work of the ministry and possesses the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, may be licensed or ordained as a minister of the Gospel.

2) LICENSE AND ORDINATION PROCEDURE

Upon a conference with the Senior Pastor and after he has approved the candidate for ordination, the Senior Pastor shall call for a council to examine and pass on the qualification of the candidate. The license and ordination council shall consist of ordained ministers of like faith invited to participate in the examination of the candidate.

After at least 3 years of pastoral ministry and if the candidate is found worthy of ordination by the council, the ordination council may ordain the candidate on behalf of the church.

The Senior Pastor shall arrange for the ordination service.

ARTICLE XIII. INDEMNIFICATION

1) ACTIONS SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

The church will indemnify any person who was or is a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending, or completed action, suit, or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative, or investigative, including all appeals (other than an action by or in the right of the church) by reason of the fact that the person is or was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, and amounts paid in settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding; and if that person acted in good faith and in a manner he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his conduct was unlawful. The termination of any action, suit, or proceeding by judgment, order, settlement, conviction, or on a plea of nolo contendere or its equivalent, shall not, of itself, create a presumption that the person did not act in good faith and in a manner that he reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the church and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful.

2) EXPENSES SUBJECT TO INDEMNIFICATION

To the extent that a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church, has been successful on the merits or otherwise in defense of any action, suit, or proceeding referred to in this Article, or in defense of any claim, issue, or matter in that action, suit, or proceeding, he or she will be indemnified against expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with the action, suit, or proceeding.

3) LIMITATIONS OF INDEMNIFICATION

Any indemnification made under this Article, may be made by the church only as authorized in the specific case on a determination that indemnification of a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church is proper in the circumstances because he has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in the Covenant Community Commitments and/or the Student Ministry Guidelines and/or Children's Ministry Guidelines and/or Usher guidelines. The determination shall be made by the Church Board.

4) TIMING OF INDEMNIFICATION

Expenses of each person seeking indemnification under this Article, may be paid by the church as they are incurred, in advance of the final disposition of the action, suit, or proceeding, as authorized by the Church Board in the specific case, on receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church to repay the amount if it is ultimately determined that he or she is not qualified to be indemnified by the church.

5) EXTENT OF INDEMNIFICATION

The indemnification provided by this Article shall be deemed to be discretionary unless otherwise required as a matter of law or under any agreement or provided by insurance purchased by the church, both as to action of each person seeking indemnification under this Article in his or her official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding that office, and may continue as to a person who has ceased to be a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church and may inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors, and administrators of that person.

6) INSURANCE

The church will purchase and maintain a \$1,000,000.00 insurance policy on behalf of any person who is or

was a pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church against any liability asserted against him or her and incurred by him or her in that capacity, or arising out of his status in that capacity, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against liability under the provisions of this Article.

ARTICLE XIV. DESIGNATED CONTRIBUTIONS

From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. All contributions made to specific funds or otherwise designated shall remain subject to the discretion and recommendation of the Elders and by the final approval of the Church Board.

ARTICLE XV. LAWSUITS AND RESTORATIONS

SUBMISSION TO ARBITRATION AND RESTORATION

We believe that Christians are prohibited from bringing civil lawsuits against other Christians or the church, its pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church to resolve disputes. We believe the church possesses all the resources necessary to resolve personal disputes between our Covenant Community Members. 1 Cor. 6:1-8 and Eph. 4:31-32

Believing that lawsuits between believers are prohibited by Scripture, all Covenant Community Members of Grace Christian Fellowship agree to submit to the restoration process as described in the bylaws and shall refrain from taking legal action against this church or any Covenant Community Member of this church pastor, elder, deacon, officer, board member, employee, or agent of the church.

ARTICLE XVI. POSITION PAPERS

The Position Papers of Grace Christian Fellowship are fundamental cornerstones to the church and the church stands on its right of religious freedom to deny Covenant Community Membership, marriage ceremonies, etc. if the person or persons violate the positions stated in these papers. Position Papers are attached as Exhibits to the By Laws. Position Papers may only be modified by Senior Pastor, with the guidance of the Elders.

ARTICLE XVII. CONFIDENTIALITY

The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidences is a sign of Christian love and respect (see Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (see Prov. 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (see Prov. 20:19; Rom. 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all Covenant Community Members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our pastors, elders, deacons, and church leaders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral/spiritual counseling, subject to the following guidelines.

Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the pastors and directors of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

- When a pastor or director is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other pastors or directors in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the pastors or directors of that church (see Prov. 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matt. 18:15-17);

- When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm to themselves or others unless others intervene (see Prov. 24:11-12);
- When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see, e.g., Rom. 13:1-5); or
- When required by law to report suspected child abuse.

Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt. 18:15-17). Therefore, except as outlined above a pastor, elder, deacon, and church leader may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside this church without the approval of the Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (1 Cor. 6:1-8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (Rom. 13:1-5). This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse.

The pastors, elders, deacons, and church leaders may, but need not, provide counselees with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

ARTICLE XVIII. Conflict of Interest

No contract or other transaction between this Corporation and one or more of its officer/directors or any other corporation, firm, association, or entity in which one or more of its officers/directors are directors or officers or are financially interested shall either be void or voidable because of such relationship or interest, because such director(s) are present at the meeting of the Church Board or a committee thereof which authorizes, approves or ratifies such contract or transaction, or because his or her votes are counted for such purpose if:

- 1) The fact of such relationship or interest is disclosed or known to the Church Council or standing committee which authorizes, approves or ratifies the contract or transaction by a vote or consent sufficient for the purpose without counting the votes of consents of such interested directors;
- 2) The fact of such relationship or interest is disclosed or known to the members entitled to vote on such contractor transaction, if any, and they authorize, approve, or ratify it by vote or written consent; or
- 3) The contract or transaction is reasonable as to the Corporation at the time it is authorized by the Church Board, a standing committee, or the Covenant Community Members.

Common or interested directors may be counted in determining the presence of a quorum at a meeting of the Church Board or a standing committee thereof which authorizes, approves, or ratifies such contract or transaction.

ARTICLE XIX. Transfer of Assets in the Event of Dissolution

If this Corporation should ever be dissolved, all of its assets remaining after payment of all outstanding debts and obligations, costs, and expenses of such dissolution shall be distributed to a nonprofit corporation or other organization which is qualified for exemption under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code or any regulations succeeding said Section.

The Board of said Corporation, defined in Article IX, shall designate the nonprofit corporation or corporation(s) or organizations(s) to receive said assets of the Corporation after dissolution. None of the assets of said Corporation shall be distributed to any Covenant Community Member, officer, or trustee of this Corporation.

ARTICLE XX. Amendments

The Bylaws may be amended, restated or repealed by a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Church Board and Elders and submitted to the Covenant Community Members for confirmation at any Church Business Meeting or Special Meeting.

CERTIFICATE OF ADOPTION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing Restated Bylaws were duly adopted at the Meeting of the Church Board held on March 20, 2016 and Elders held on _____, 201X.

(Corporate Secretary's signature)

Addendum A

ARTICLE X. CHURCH LEADERSHIP DUTIES AND POWERS | 1) SENIOR PASTOR | ELECTION OF SENIOR PASTOR

Election of Senior Pastor:

Should the position of Senior Pastor become vacant, the Associated Pastor with elder and board approval shall assume the responsibilities of the position under the title of Interim Senior Pastor for a period of six months. During that period, a Search Committee shall seek out a suitable replacement of which the Interim Senior Pastor may be considered. The committee shall be comprised of the Elders and the members the Church Board and one at-large Covenant Community Member. The at large Covenant Community Member shall be nominated by the Elders and voted by the Church Board at a special called business meeting. The committee members appointed by their held position may begin work on a nomination before the one at large Covenant Community Member is voted on by the Church Board. The recommendation of the Search Committee shall constitute a nomination and the committee shall bring, for consideration to the Church Board and Elders.

The confirmation of a replacement Senior Pastor shall take place at a special business meeting of the Covenant Community Members called for that purpose of confirmation as set forth in these Restated Bylaws.

Exhibit A

Position Paper on The Five Solas of the Reformation

The bedrock underpinning of our Christian worldview at Grace Christian Fellowship is the four-fold foundation of the Authority of God's Word, the Sovereignty of God, the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the belief in the Trinity. The walls of our Christian doctrinal stance are what has been historically referred to as the Five Solas of the Reformation.

They are as follows:

SOLA SCRIPTURA (Scripture Alone)

We affirm the inerrant Scripture to be the sole source of written divine revelation, which alone can bind the conscience. The Bible alone teaches all that is necessary for our salvation from sin and is the standard by which all Christian behavior must be measured.

We deny that any creed, council or individual may bind a Christian's conscience, that the Holy Spirit speaks independently of or contrary to what is set forth in the Bible, or that personal spiritual experience can ever be a vehicle of revelation (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

SOLUS CHRISTUS (Christ Alone)

We affirm that our salvation is accomplished by the mediatorial work of the historical Christ alone. His sinless life and substitutionary atonement alone are sufficient for our justification and reconciliation to the Father.

We deny that the gospel is preached if Christ's substitutionary work is not declared and faith in Christ and his work is not solicited (Hebrews 9:11-28).

SOLA GRATIA (Grace Alone)

We affirm that in salvation we are rescued from God's wrath by his grace alone. It is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit that brings us to Christ by releasing us from our bondage to sin and raising us from spiritual death to spiritual life.

We deny that salvation is in any sense a human work. Human methods, techniques or strategies by themselves cannot accomplish this transformation. Faith is not produced by our unregenerate human nature, but comes through this gift of grace (Eph 2:8-9).

SOLA FIDE (Faith Alone)

We affirm that justification is by grace alone through faith alone because of Christ alone. In justification Christ's law abiding righteousness is imputed to us as the only possible satisfaction of God's perfect justice. It is by grace that we have been enabled by God's Spirit to trust in Christ's life, death and resurrection for our salvation.

We deny that justification rests on any merit to be found in us, and we deny that a person is justified through any combination of faith and human effort (Romans 3:28).

SOLI DEO GLORIA (Glory to God Alone)

We affirm that because salvation is of God and has been accomplished by God, it is for God's glory and that we must glorify him always. We must live our entire lives before the face of God, under the authority of God and for his glory alone.

We deny that we can properly glorify God if our worship is confused with entertainment, if we neglect either Law or Gospel in our preaching, or if self-improvement, self-esteem or self-fulfillment are allowed to become alternatives to the gospel (1 Corinthians 10:31, 1 Peter 4:11).

Exhibit B

Position Paper on What GCF Believes About The Five Points of Calvinism

Total Depravity (Total Inability – Radical Corruption)

Man sins by choice and by the motivation of his corrupt nature. By nature we violate God's holy law and this sin makes man hostile towards God (Ecc 9:3; Rom 8:7). No one can escape the reaches of sin (Rom 3:23). There is nothing more evil and wicked than the heart of man (Jer 17:9). Because of sin, man cannot even choose to do good (Rom 7:18; 8:7). All are spiritually dead and slaves to their sinful desires (Jn 8:34, Eph 2:1-3; Rom 5:12). Man does not possess the ability to overcome this evil nature on his own (Jer 13:23); nor can he discern the things of God for they are foolishness to the lost (1 Cor 2:14). Man will never seek God without Divine intervention (Rom 3:11). In his fallen state there is nothing man could do to save himself apart from God's mercy, thus the Lord is not required to save anyone. (Rom 9:16).

Unconditional Election (Sovereign Choice)

Because of his total depravity it is impossible for man to save himself (Jn 6:44,65). Save for the grace of God, humanity would be eternally damned (Eph 2:4-5). Therefore, God, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, chose certain individuals unto salvation. He chose them before time, according to His sovereign will (Eph 1:4-6; 2 Thess 2:13; 2 Tim 1:9). God elected some to receive mercy in order that He may be glorified (Rom 9:23). He did not elect believers because he foresaw that they would choose Him, rather, He chose them according to His good pleasure (Rom 8:28-30). Election therefore was not determined by or conditioned upon any virtuous quality or act foreseen in man. In choosing some to receive undeserved mercy, the Lord chose that others would receive justice for their sin and rebellion (Rom 9:17-18; 11:7-8). This is the perfectly just thing for God to do (Gen 18:25). Man can do nothing to affect God's choice (Rom 9:16). Thus God's choice of the sinner, not the sinner's choice of Christ, is the cause of salvation.

Limited Atonement (Definite Atonement)

Christ's sacrifice was designed specifically for the redemption of His people - His sheep (Jn 10:14-16). His sacrifice didn't just make salvation possible – it guaranteed the salvation of the elect (Matt 20:28). Christ death was sufficient for all sins but efficient only for His children's sins. Christ died for the invisible Church (Eph 5:25). In addition to putting away the sins of His people, Christ's redemption secured everything necessary for their salvation; including faith, which unites them to Him (Eph 2:8,9). Christ's death was the perfect and complete sacrifice. When Jesus said, "It is finished" - He meant it – the sins of His children were paid for.

Irresistible Grace (Effectual Grace)

Christ taught that all whom God has elected will come to a knowledge of Him (Jn 6:37). They cannot resist the bestowing of God's grace upon them – nor would they want to. Man does not open his heart to receive Christ; rather, Christ opens his heart so that He may enter (Acts 16:14). All whom God elects believe in Him (Acts 13:48). The elect are not born again because they believe; they believe because they are born again by grace (1 Jn 5:1). The result of God's irresistible grace is the most certain response by the elect to the internal call, when the external call of the Gospel is given (Acts 9:4-6). The external call (which is made to all without distinction) can be, and often is, rejected; whereas the internal call (which is made only to the elect) cannot be rejected. Through this special call, the Spirit irresistibly draws sinners willingly to Christ.

Perseverance of the Saints (Preservation of the Saints)

All who are chosen by God, redeemed by Christ, and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved. They are kept in faith by the power of Almighty God (Jude 24) and persevere to the end. God promises to never let His elect turn

away from Him (Jer 32:40). His gift of salvation is irrevocable (Rom 11:29). He will not lose even one of those who were chosen (Jn 6:39; 10:28-29). God promises to finish what He began in the elect (Phil 1:6). Those who ‘fall away’ were never saved, or are Prodigal Sons who will be disciplined by God (1 Jn 2:19, Lk 15:). Salvation is never an excuse for sin (Gal 5:13). Nothing can separate God’s true children from Him (Rom 8:38-39).

Exhibit C

**Position Paper on
Marriage, Family, & Sexuality**

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE:

Since marriage is a God-ordained picture of Christ’s union with His Church, we believe that God disapproves of and forbids unlawful divorce and intends marriage to last until a spouse dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication and desertion, but reconciliation through biblical counsel ought to be sought prior to any permanent dissolution.

Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6

GCF’s Marriage Covenant:

Believing that God, in His wisdom and providence, has ordained and establishes human marriage as a covenant relationship intended to reflect the eternal marriage covenant established through the death, burial, and Resurrection of His Son with His Church, and therefore believing that human marriage is a sacred and lifelong promise, reflecting our unconditional love for one another, and believing that God intends for the human marriage covenant to reflect His promise never to leave us or forsake us because of what He has done for us through His Son, Jesus Christ, we, the undersigned husband and wife, male and female, as an image of God, do hereby affirm and reaffirm our solemn pledge to fulfill our marriage vows, so help us God; we furthermore pledge to exalt the sacred nature, glory and permanence of God's eternal marriage covenant in His Son with the Church through our marriage, by calling others to honor and fulfill their marriage vows; and we, upon full and informed consent and with full knowledge and understanding of this covenant and with the intent to enter into and be bound by the terms of this covenant, hereby irrevocably covenant and consent to submit any marital dispute we may have that we cannot resolve and any question concerning whether our marriage should be dissolved to the peacemaking process. This peacemaking process will include but not necessarily be limited to pastoral counseling, and if necessary, professional marital and spiritual counseling because we believe that any and all marital and family disputes and issues involve deeply important religious questions that should be resolved by Christians according to the standards set forth in the Holy Bible, and therefore we do both hereby agree to be bound by any arbitration decision as to any such dispute or issues concerning our marriage and family, which pastoral and counseling professionals have established.

In the presence of God and these witnesses, and by a holy covenant, I,

In the presence of God and these witnesses, and by a holy covenant, I,

Husband's Name

Wife's Name

joyfully receive you as God's perfect gift for me, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love you, to honor you, to cherish you and protect you, forsaking all others as long as we both shall live.

joyfully receive you as God's perfect gift for me, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love you, to honor you, to respect you, forsaking all others as long as we both shall live.

Husband's Signature

Wife's Signature

Witnessed this ____ day of _____, by _____

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS:

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the leaders (pastors and elders) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church.

Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:18; 1 Tim. 2:8-15; 3:4-5, 12

We believe that God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loves the church. The wife is to submit herself to the Scriptural leadership of her husband as the church submits to the headship of Christ. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents are responsible for teaching their children spiritual and moral values and leading them, through consistent lifestyle example and appropriate discipline, including Scriptural corporal correction.

Gen. 1:26-28; Ex. 20:12; Deut. 6:4-9; Ps. 127:3-5; Prov. 19:18; 22:15; 23:13-14; Mk. 10:6-12; I Cor. 7:1-16; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4, Col. 3:18-21; Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1-7

HUMAN SEXUALITY:

We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God disapproves of and forbids any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance.

Gen. 2:24; Gen. 19:5, 13; Gen. 26:8-9; Lev. 18:1-30; Rom. 1: 26-29; 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 13:4

We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman.

Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22-23

Exhibit D

Position Paper on Homosexuality

Grace Christian Fellowship believes that all expressions of sexual intimacy outside the bonds of heterosexual marriage are both unbiblical and immoral. Therefore, Grace Christian Fellowship does not believe that homosexuality is deserving of greater disapproval than any other sexual sin (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Neither are those involved in homosexuality deserving of special condemnation; as the Bible states in Romans 3:23, '*All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*' More importantly, we believe that Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but to redeem and free the particular forms of bondage in which they find themselves.

Grace Christian Fellowship recognizes the important distinctions between persons and policies. While echoing the Biblical message of compassion, forgiveness and redemption for individuals, we nonetheless stand firm in our opposition to social policies that have the effect of legitimizing homosexual behavior. We believe that the legitimization of homosexuality through such matters as the redefinition of the family, the legalization of same-sex marriages, and the instruction of children and youth that homosexuality and bisexuality are morally equivalent to heterosexuality is not only unbiblical, but harmful.

From the perspective of the Biblical witness, which is of fundamental importance for Grace Christian Fellowship, homosexuality is just one form in which the brokenness of humanity reveals itself, along with greed, hatred, fear, dishonesty and intemperance, etc. What people who struggle with homosexual desire need above all else is restoration through Christ, truth, compassion and an atmosphere of acceptance as they journey toward wholeness and change.

Grace Christian Fellowship stands against any form of evil; including prejudice, bigotry and violence. We believe that moral opposition is not a license to engage in any form of slander or harassment against those with whom we disagree. Morally and legally speaking, we believe that a crime against a homosexual is no less a crime against humanity, and deserves to be punished to the fullest extent of the law.

Summation

Grace Christian Fellowship cites homosexuality as one of many disorders that beset fallen humanity. Choosing to reconcile such desires through homosexual behavior, taking on a homosexual identity or a homosexual lifestyle is considered a distortion of God's intent for an individual and is thus sinful.

Yet, Grace Christian Fellowship respects the complexity and depth of struggle that men and women must endure when faced with their homosexuality; no less is Grace's desire to walk beside them on their sojourn. Indeed, there is a growing witness of many men and women who have abandoned their homosexual condition and testify that they can surrender to God who is able to change them. Christ offers a healing alternative to those with homosexual desires. Grace Christian Fellowship upholds such redemption for the homosexual person as a process whereby sin's power is broken. God's all-encompassing grace is realized and the individual is freed to know and experience their true identity as discovered in Christ and His Church. That process entails the freedom to grow into heterosexuality.

Central to this redemption is Grace's desire to encourage and assist the Church to be engaged in this healing process. Grace seeks to inform Christians who respond to homosexual men and women with animosity and fear, influence those who mistakenly uphold homosexuality as a valid, Christ-centered lifestyle and convey to the homosexual the fullness of redemption found in Christ Jesus Our Savior and Lord.

Exhibit E

Position Paper on Infant Baptism & Baby Dedication

Within the Reformed tradition – which we at Grace Christian Fellowship certainly subscribe to - you will find two main views concerning baptism. In the Presbyterian tradition you will find as the norm the practice of paedobaptism – the baptism of infants. Their understanding of infant baptism has gotten a bad rap from the evangelical church that practices believer’s baptism, because they confuse the Presbyterian view with the Roman Catholic view.

This Reformed view is never to be confused with the Roman view of infant baptism, because the Roman church teaches that infant baptism saves or regenerates the baby by infusing saving grace into the soul of the infant, which in turn washes away original sin without any faith on the part of the baby.

Presbyterian infant baptism has to do with God’s covenant relationship with Christian families, and as you will see, we at Grace are certainly sympathetic to this understanding.

The second Reformed tradition is found in your Reformed Baptist congregations, which teach that baptism is a sign that one has come to faith in Jesus Christ. Hence, baptism is for those young people and older who have an understanding of their salvation and are publicly professing their faith before the Lord and the congregation. As they are immersed they are illustrating their death, burial and resurrection as a new creature in Christ, which has come to them by faith through grace. This is called credo-baptism.

Although we at Grace Christian Fellowship are sensitive to the covenantal aspects of the Presbyterian infant baptism, we subscribe to adult or believer’s baptism.

The foundation of all of God’s dealings with man is the covenant. It is the basis of all that God has done, is doing, and will do in time and on earth. Nothing can be understood rightly apart from an understanding of God’s covenant.

In general: The covenant is the means by which man has communion with God. It is a living bond between God and man wherein God pledges to be our God and claims us to be His people. The common formula by which God describes this relationship is, "I will be your God and you will be my people."

When God comes to Abraham, He declares this very thing. We read in Genesis 17:7-9: "And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." And God said to Abraham: "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations."

We see here that God’s covenant promise is for Abraham and his descendents – so God’s covenant promises are extended to the family members of believers. Does being raised in a Christian home and being baptized or dedicated as an infant guarantee a child’s salvation?

Not necessarily; we know from Romans that not all that are of Abraham are truly Israel. Only those who have had their hearts circumcised – in other words – have come to faith in Jesus Christ – only they are the true children of Abraham. Remember that Ishmael – a son of Abraham - was not a child of the promise, and neither was Abraham’s grandson Esau.

But I believe it is still correct to say that the children of believers receive unique blessings from the Lord because they are under the covenant of Grace that the believing parents are under and are enjoying. 1 Corinthians 7:14

speaks of the children of Christian parents being seen by the Lord as clean or sanctified – not saved – but set apart – in order that they may receive the favor and blessings of the Lord God.

The Church is the community of the covenant; and the preaching of the Word, the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, the fellowship and mutual care and encouragements are all signs, seals, tokens, expressions, and instruments of the covenant, through which God grants covenant mercies to His people. The hope of glory is the ultimate realization of the covenant relationship.

The Bible is the Book of the covenant and the record of history is the story of the outworking of God's covenant purpose. Nothing is understood rightly apart from an understanding of the covenant. Jesus is our Savior because He is the Mediator of the Covenant. The gospel promises are invitations to enter and enjoy a covenant relationship with God. Faith is nothing more than embracing the covenant. The Christian life is in its essence, the sinner enjoying covenant communion with His Savior.

At Grace Christian Fellowship we believe that children of believers have a special place in the Covenant Community. We read in Psalm 127:3 'Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from Him.' And then Jesus said in Matthew 19:14 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.

Children are indeed special gifts from the Lord and are highly valued by Him. The Lord God certainly saves His elect as individuals – one at a time – but little children are a part of something bigger – the family – and the family is to be a part of something bigger – the local church or covenant community – and the covenant community at Grace Christian is a part of something even bigger – the universal church of Jesus Christ – the Body of Christ.

At Grace Christian Fellowship we recognize the importance of presenting our children to the Lord before the family of God. In some churches this ceremony is called a dedication service: The parents are in essence saying to the Lord: 'We understand Lord, that our child has been given to us by You as a precious gift, but we recognize our inability to raise this child as You would ultimately desire, so we present our children to You and ask that You would bless, protect, provide for, and save our child - and guide and lead us as parents to raise them in a home that is pleasing to You and glorifies Your name.

That's beautiful and we subscribe to that understanding. At Grace we take it a small step further by recognizing the importance of what I have just explained concerning our covenant relationship with the Lord. At birth the children of believers are now a part of the covenant community of the local church; and in our baby dedication ceremony we are cognitively and publicly acknowledging this belief in order to encourage the parents and the church that God is with our children.

Exhibit F

Position Paper on **Giving & Finances**

We believe that every Christian, as a steward of that portion of God's wealth entrusted to him, is obligated to support his local church financially. We believe that God has established scriptural guidelines that encourage regular giving as the Lord blesses and provides, but that every Christian should also give other offerings sacrificially and cheerfully to the support of the church, the relief of those in need, and the spread of the Gospel. We believe that a Christian relinquishes all rights to direct the use of their financial contribution or offering once the gift has been made.

Gen. 14:20; Prov. 3:9-10; Acts 4:34-37; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:6-7; Gal. 6:6; Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 John 3:17