

**THE
VISION,
CONSTITUTION,
AND
BYLAWS OF
GRACE CHAPEL
OF
CLIFTON PARK**

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10/01/02
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OUR VISION

Lives Transformed through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

OUR COMMITMENTS

As God enables, to:

- Serve the Lord joyfully and confidently in all He calls us to do;
- Demonstrate the grace and love of God in the way we live, so others will desire to know Him also;
- Make a difference in the lives of others, our community, and the world; and
- Pray for and support one another.

KEY OBJECTIVES

Praise, Worship, and Glorify God;
Pray for God's leading;
Share the Gospel with the lost;
Nurture those new in the faith;
Equip all members for service; and
Support, love, and encourage those in any need.

SHARED VALUES

Create an environment which recognizes and promotes our commitment to:

- Prayer, worship, and ministry;
- Openness and candor;
- Integrity and high ethical standards;
- Individual contribution, development, and growth;
- Treat each other with dignity and respect, valuing each other's diversity;
- Work together to advance the cause of Christ.

As a Community Church, we find unity in the essentials of the faith. We also desire to value the diversity among believers in the non-essentials and strive for openness, acceptance, and understanding of the common spiritual needs and worship experiences of the church body.

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CONSTITUTION OF GRACE CHAPEL OF CLIFTON PARK

ARTICLE I: NAME

The legal name of this church shall be “GRACE CHAPEL OF CLIFTON PARK,” a non-profit organization founded in 1990 and incorporated under the laws of the state of New York as of December 4, 1990.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be to glorify God and promote the advancement of His kingdom through:

- 1) public worship
- 2) the preaching of the gospel
- 3) the personal lives and witness of its members
- 4) the teaching of God’s word for the growth and equipping of the body
- 5) the outreach and missionary endeavors to those in need physically or spiritually
- 6) the development and exercise of spiritual gifts.

ARTICLE III: CREED (Not Amendable)

Preamble: As a body of God’s believing children, the faith of this membership is based in that revelation of God’s holy will found in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The Scripture stands alone as the sole authority in all matters of faith and doctrine. We acknowledge and openly accept that there are differences in interpretation on some matters, e.g., mode of Baptism, order of end time events, etc. Therefore, the preceding statement does not in any way replace the Scriptures or claim to be an exhaustive or exclusive statement of Biblical truth. It is intended rather to relate us to the continuing body of historic Christianity which finds its basis in the person and work of Jesus Christ as given in the Gospels and the significance of that person and work expressed in the Old and New Testaments. We would be one with all true believers in Christ both past and present.

S1) The Bible

We believe that the Bible, consisting of 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, is inerrant in its original text, was given by divine inspiration, and is the Word of God (II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:19,20,21; I Thess. 2:13), and that it constitutes the only perfect rule and final authority in all matters pertaining to Christian faith and practice (Acts 17:11; Isa. 8:20).

S2) The Godhead

We believe there is only one living and true God, perfect, infinite, and eternal (Matt. 5:48; I Kings 8:27; Psalms 90:2), Who is unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, love, and truth (Mal. 3:6; I Tim. 1:17; Gen. 17:1; Isa. 6:3; Psalms 19:9; Ex. 34:6; John 3:16), Who is the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the Universe (Gen. 1:1; Heb. 11:3; Neh. 1:2, 3; Psalms 103:19; Eph. 1:11), Who eternally exists in three persons; namely, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who are equal in their divine perfection and harmonious in the execution of their distinct offices (Matt. 28:19; John 5:17; John 14:16, 17; John 15:26; Eph. 2:18).

S3) Man

a. His Creation

We believe that man was created by a special act of God; that man was created in the image and likeness of God, possessing personality and innocence; that man was endowed with power or rational and responsible choice in view of moral ends; and that the purpose of the creation of man was to glorify God (Gen. 1:27; Col. 3:10; Acts 17:24-28; Isa. 43:7).

b. His Fall

We believe man was subject to trial in the Garden of Eden, in order to test man’s loyalty to his Maker (Gen. 2:15-17); under trial, man lost his holy estate, was alienated from God, and became depraved physically, mentally, morally, and spiritually, by voluntarily transgressing His positive command and yielding to the enticement of Satan. In consequence of the fact of disobedience, the entire human race became involved in guilt and in corruption, so that in every heart, there is, by nature, that evil disposition which eventually leads to responsible acts of sin and to just condemnation (Gen. 3:1-6; Rom. 5:12, 13; 3:10-12, 23; 1:18-31; Eph. 4:18; I John 1:8-10).

S4) The Son

We believe that in the fullness of time, the eternally pre-existent Son humbled Himself and assumed man’s nature by being

born of the virgin Mary, thus uniting organically and indissolubly the divine and human natures in their completeness in the unique person of Jesus Christ (Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:18-25; John 1:14; I Tim. 3:16; Heb. 2:14).

We believe that God has provided redemption for man through the mediatorial work of Christ, who voluntarily offered Himself on the Cross of Calvary as a perfect sacrifice for sin, the just suffering for the unjust, bearing sin's curse, and tasting death for every man (Matt. 20:28; Heb. 9:11, 12; 1 Pet. 3:18; Gal. 3:13; Heb. 2:9; I Tim. 2:5, 6).

We believe that on the third day, He rose from the dead and appeared to various of His followers and that He ascended to the right hand of the Father, where He performs the ministry of intercession. He shall come again, personally and visibly, to complete His saving work and to consummate the eternal plan of God (1 Cor. 15:3-8; Luke 24:39; Rom. 8:34, 10:14; Acts 1:11; Jude 6:1; Thess. 4:17).

S5) The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He proceedeth from the Father and the Son (John 15:26).

His principal ministry since His advent at Pentecost is:

- To reprove or convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8-11);
- To restrain the progress of evil until God's purposes are accomplished (II Thess. 2:7);
- To bear witness to the truth preached (Acts 5:30-32);
- To regenerate those who repent of their sins and exercise faith in Christ (John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5);
- To instruct, comfort, and guide God's children (John 14:16-18, 26; 16:13);
- To sanctify them (II Thess. 2:13; I Pet. 1:1-3);
- To empower them for life and service (Rom. 8:2; Acts 1:8; Eph. 3:16; I Cor. 2:1-4; I Thess. 1:5);
- And to quicken their mortal bodies (Rom. 8:11).

S6) Salvation

We believe that salvation is wholly of grace (Eph. 2:8; Titus 3:5), being planned by the Father, provided by the Blood of the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13; John 3:3-5).

In justification, the believer is absolved of guilt and declared righteous in the sight of God (Rom. 5:1; 4:4, 5; Acts 13:39).

In adoption, the believer is constituted a member of the household of God (Rom. 8).

In regeneration, the principle of a new life is implanted in the believer's heart (John 3:3; Titus 2:14).

In sanctification, the principle of a new life is strengthened and developed increasingly (Rom. 6-8).

In glorification, this work will come to its perfect culmination in an ultimate and complete renewal of human nature (I Cor. 13; I John 5:11-13).

Repentance and faith are essential attitudes to be found in any one person who rightly claims the blessing of salvation. Repentance and faith emphasize the fact that it is not through human merit of any kind but through the grace of God that redemption is achieved through the substitutionary death of Jesus Christ upon the cross.

S7) The Church

We believe that the church, invisible and universal, is an organism composed of the redeemed of all ages. We believe that the church is manifest locally and visibly through companies of believers in Christ, voluntarily joined together, and meeting at stated times for worship and to observe the sacraments.

We believe that it is the duty of the church:

- To give the Gospel as a witness to all men (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 1:8);
- To build itself up in the most holy faith (Jude 20, 21; Eph. 4:11, 12, 16; Acts 20:32); and
- To glorify God (I Peter 4:11).

S8) Sacraments

We believe that Christian sacraments are outward rites appointed by Christ not as a means of salvation, but as visible signs and seals of the facts and realities of salvation.

a) Baptism

We believe that Baptism by water is the public confession of Christ as Savior and Lord. Baptism is a symbol of one's union by faith and covenant with Christ in death, burial, and resurrection unto newness of life (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38-41; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:11-12; Acts 8:36-39).

b) The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper should be observed by all believers in obedience to the command: "This do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). The Lord's Supper consists in partaking of the consecrated emblems of bread and wine and symbolizes the death of Christ for the remission of our sins and our continual dependence upon Him for our sustenance. The Lord's Supper witnesses the mystical union of the believer with Christ (John 15:4). The union of believers around the Lord's table should be open to all who are in right relationship with one another and with the Lord (Matt. 25:26-30; Luke 22:19-20; I Cor. 10, 11:23-26).

S9) Last Things

We believe that at the end of the age, Christ will descend from Heaven, the dead shall be raised bodily, that they and those living at the end of the age shall be judged by God; and that those redeemed will enter into full possession of eternal bliss in the presence of God, that Satan will be bound, and the wicked shall be condemned to eternal death and separation from God (I Pet. 4:17; I Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Acts 1:11; Acts 24:15; Matt. 25:31-46).

ARTICLE IV: POLITY

S1) Religious Corporation Law

This church shall be free in polity. It is recognized to be subject to the "Religious Corporation Law" of the State of New York, with particular reference to Article 180.

S2) Corporation and Congregation

A distinction exists between a church as a religious corporation and the same church as a religious society. The former consists of all persons having a right to vote at corporate meetings and has jurisdiction over all property and other secular or civil affairs of the church. The latter consists of the active members of the church and has authority over spiritual and ecclesiastical matters. The religious corporation is designated as "the corporation"; the religious society acting as a unit is herein designated "the congregation."

S3) Time of Public Worship

Public worship and the weekly meetings of the church shall be at such times and subject to such changes as may be directed by the Board of Elders.

S4) Ecclesiastical Authority

In matters of an ecclesiastical nature relating to the government and discipline of the church, the decision of the congregation is final and binding.

ARTICLE V: CONGREGATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

S1) Requirements

Any individual who has by faith accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, who presents evidence of regeneration, has been baptized by water, affirms personal acceptance of the creed and purpose of this church, and attends membership classes may be admitted to the Congregational membership by the Elders.

S2) Member Commitments

A candidate for membership shall publicly testify of his or her salvation through Jesus Christ and pledge himself or herself to support the church at home and abroad with prayers, presence, means, and service as God prospers him or her.

S3) Termination

Termination of membership shall be by:

- a) Death;
- b) Letter of transfer or dismissal desired by the member; or
- c) Exclusion.

The Elders may remove an individual from membership if for a period of one year, such member has not communicated with the church and if diligent effort has been made to restore such member to fellowship with the church.

The Elders may remove an individual from membership if, after investigation, it is found that such individual is living inconsistently with his or her Christian profession, or would disturb the peace and unity of the church.

ARTICLE VI: OFFICERS

Preamble: God's plan for leadership in the local church as revealed in the scriptures indicates He provided certain individuals and gifted them for service under the direction of the Holy Spirit to oversee, establish, and nurture His people in the faith. To those called to be Elders, God gave the ultimate responsibility for the oversight of that particular body and the shepherding of its members. To those He called to be Deacons, He gave the task of servicing those areas of need within the body, which would otherwise prohibit the Elders from performing their Biblical mandate. Together, both are admonished to serve in harmony, to promote the good and welfare of the body, and to exhibit the love and grace of Almighty God in their lives individually and corporately (I Cor. 3:9; Eph. 4:11, 12, Acts 20:28; Acts 14:23; I Pet. 5:14; Acts 6:2-4; Titus 2:7, 8).

S1) Officers

The officers of this church shall consist of the following:

- a) Minister(s),
- b) Elders,
- c) Clerk,
- d) Deacons,
- e) Trustees,
- f) Treasurers, and
- g) others as may be duly appointed.

S2) Terms and Qualifications

Unless specified elsewhere in this constitution, the officers shall be elected to serve a term of three years, except to serve out an unexpired term or to initiate office.

Candidates for these offices shall be congregational members in good and regular standing, spiritually mature, having given evidence of the qualifications set forth in the Scriptures (Elders - I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9; Deacons - I Timothy 3:8-13).

Elders shall be men elected from the membership by vote of the congregation and shall be preferably chosen from those who have served as an Elder or Deacon in this or another church or who are deemed otherwise qualified by the Board of Elders. In addition, it is suggested that candidates be members of GRACE CHAPEL for at least three years prior to being elected to the office of Elder.

Deacons shall be elected from the membership by vote of the corporation. It is suggested that candidates for Deacon also be members of GRACE CHAPEL for a period of at least one year and have served on some committee or other leadership position prior to being elected to the office of Deacon.

S3) Role of Elders

- a) Shepherd the Flock: Serving in all humility, Elders are to guide, direct, guard, nurture, and protect the members of the body, seeking to meet their needs and assist in any way possible, warning against harmful influences and guarding against false teachers (Acts 20:23; I Pet. 5:1-3).
- b) Lead through Example: Elders are to provide a Scriptural role model and are to set a pattern before the flock of a rightly ordered life - with a single purpose, to glorify God (I Pet. 5:3).
- c) Teach and Exhort: Elders are to see that the flock is fed through insightful and accurate Biblical instruction and admonition (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9).
- d) Refute Those Who Contradict Truth: Elders are to confront those who are teaching what they should not teach or who are continuing in a pattern of behavior contradictory to Biblical truth. Thus, Elders are to keep closing potential entrances for Satan, so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community (Acts 20: 29-31).
- e) Manage the Church of God: Elders are to oversee the life of the church, with the assistance of other Godly leaders. Elders must be people who can "rule well" (I Tim. 3:5 & 5:7).
- f) Pray for the Congregation: Elders are to pray for the spiritual and physical well being of members of the congregation (James 5:14).
- g) Be Accountable: As spiritual leaders of the congregation, the Elders shall direct the life of the congregation in pursuit

of the goals as set forth in this constitution. They shall make themselves accountable to the congregation for their actions in this regard (Ez. 34: 1-16).

S4) Biblical Qualifications for Elders (I Tim. 3:1-7, II Tim. 4:2 & 2:24, & Titus 1:6-9)

- a) Above Reproach Elders must be blameless, presenting no patterns of Scriptural disobedience or grounds for accusation.
- b) Devoted Spouses Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.
- c) Temperate Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
- d) Prudent Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
- e) Respectable Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and good behavior.
- f) Hospitable Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
- g) Able to Teach Elders must be able to communicate the truth of God and exhort sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
- h) Not Addicted to Wine Elders must be free from addictions and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- i) Not Pugnacious Elders must be gentle and characterized by forbearance and tenderness - not having a quick temper.
- j) Uncontentious Elders must not be given to quarrelling or selfish argumentation.
- k) Free from the Love of Money Elders must not be stingy, greedy, or out for sordid gain. They should not be preoccupied with amassing material things, but, rather, should be a model of giving.
- l) Manage Own Household Elders must have a well-ordered household, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents.)
- m) Not a New Convert Elders must not be new believers. They must have been Christians for long enough to demonstrate the reality of their conversion and the depth of their spirituality.
- n) Good Reputation w/ Outsiders Elders must be well respected by unbelievers and must be free from hypocrisy
- o) Not Self-Willed Elders must not be stubborn, insensitive, or prone to force opinions on others. They must be more interested in service than in self-pleasure.
- p) Not Quick-Tempered Elders must be able to exercise self-control and patience in difficult situations.
- q) Loves What is Good Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
- r) Just Elders must base their judgment on Scriptural principle.
- s) Devout Elders must be reverent, continually desiring to be separated from sin. They must be devoted to prayer, to the study of Scripture, and to the guarding of their own spiritual walk.
- t) Holding Fast the Faithful Word Elders must be stable in the faith, obedient to the word of God, and continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

S5) Role of Deacons

The Deacons serve under the direction of the Elders, undertaking those areas of administration and service necessary for the functioning of the church in carrying out God's purposes.

S6) Biblical Qualifications for Deacons (I Tim. 3:8-13)

- a) Individuals of Dignity Deacons must be mature, of sound mind and character, and yielded to the Holy Spirit.
- b) Not Double-Tongued Deacons must demonstrate verbal consistency. They must not be prone to saying one thing to one person and something else to another.
- c) Not addicted to wine Deacons must be free from addictions and must be willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- d) Not fond of Sordid Gain Deacons must be purely motivated in their service.
- e) Holding to the Mystery of Faith with a Clear Conscience Deacons must have a sound knowledge of Christian truths and a lifestyle in accord with them. They must not be easily swayed from the truth.
- f) Beyond Reproach Deacons must display a lifestyle free from on-going patterns of Scriptural disobedience.
- g) First Tested Deacons must have proven over time that they are faithful and that their walk is credible.
- h) Manage Household Well Deacons must have well-ordered households, a healthy family life, and well-behaved children. (Pertains to those children still under the authority of the parents.)

S7) Clerk

The Clerk of the congregation / corporation shall be selected from among the active elders and shall hold office until the

next annual meeting or until a successor shall be elected.

S8) Treasurer(s)

Treasurer(s) shall be elected from the congregational membership by the vote of the corporation to serve a term of three years, except to fill out an unexpired term or to initiate office.

S9) Loyalty Statement

All officers are bound to uphold the constitution of this church. Officers shall not only manifest the minimum qualifications for membership and a sincere dedication to the peace and unity of this church, but shall give evidence of capability of leadership in Christ's Church and a hearty sympathy with the basic creed and purpose of this church.

ARTICLE VII: MINISTER(S)

S1) Senior Pastor

- a) This office is highly honored (I Tim 5:17). As he serves Christ in the church, he is termed Minister. As it is his duty to be prudent, wise, an example to the flock, and to govern well in the house and kingdom of Christ, he is termed Elder. As he is held accountable for spiritually shepherding the entire flock of God (Ezekiel 34:10), he is called Pastor.
- b) The Senior Pastor of this church shall be duly ordained by a church or ecclesiastical body recognized by this congregation, or ordained by this congregation itself. Either form of ordination shall be deemed valid. The Senior Pastor shall demonstrate a hearty sympathy with the basic statements of faith, purpose, and vision, and shall uphold the whole of Scripture and the constitution of this church.
- c) The Senior Pastor of this church shall be called, settled, and his salary fixed only by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a congregational corporate meeting called for that purpose.
- d) The Senior Pastor shall serve until his elected period of service is terminated. The pastoral relation may be dissolved either by the church or by the pastor by a written notice of such intention at least one month in advance or by mutual consent.
- e) The Senior Pastor may be dismissed by a majority vote of the full Board of Elders and/or a majority vote of the members present at a congregational corporate meeting called for that purpose.
- f) The Senior Pastor shall be accorded all rights and privileges of the regular membership.

S2) Associate Pastors

- a) Associate Pastors of this church shall be duly ordained or in the process of ordination. Such ordination shall be by a church or ecclesiastical body recognized by this congregation or ordained by this congregation itself. Either form of ordination shall be deemed valid. An Associate Pastor shall demonstrate a hearty sympathy with the basic statements of faith, purpose, and vision, and shall uphold the whole of Scripture and the constitution of this church.
- b) Associate Pastors of this church shall meet the qualifications and shall hold the office of Elder. As such, they may serve as an active member of the Elder Board, if so called.
- c) Associate Pastors of this church shall be called, settled, and their salaries fixed only by a two-thirds vote of the members present at a congregational corporate meeting called for that purpose.
- d) Associate Pastors of this church shall serve until their elected period of service is terminated. The pastoral relation may be dissolved either by the church or by the pastor by a written notice of such intention at least one month in advance or by mutual consent.
- e) Associate Pastors of this church may be dismissed by a majority vote of the full Board of Elders and/or a majority vote of the members present at a congregational corporate meeting called for that purpose.

- f) Associate Pastors shall be accorded all rights and privileges of the regular membership.

S3) Other Ministerial Staff

- a) Other Ministerial Staff of this church shall be called, settled, and their salaries fixed by the Board of Elders in compliance with the approved budgetary process of this church.
- b) Other Ministerial Staff of this church shall serve until their elected period of service is terminated. The Ministerial Staff relation may be dissolved either by the church or by the Minister by a written notice of such intention at least one month in advance or by mutual consent.
- c) Other Ministerial Staff of this church may be dismissed by a majority vote of the full Board of Elders and/or a majority vote of the members present at a congregational corporate meeting called for that purpose.
- d) Other Ministerial Staff of this church shall be accorded all rights and privileges of the regular membership.

ARTICLE VIII: BOARDS

S1) The Board of Elders

- a) The Board of Elders shall consist of all active elders, the Senior Pastor, and one Associate Pastor as determined by the current Board. An active Elder is one who is serving a current term.
- b) The Board of Elders is designated by the congregation to act in its behalf in the management of its ecclesiastical affairs and to oversee the carrying out of its temporal (corporate) activities.
- c) The Board of Elders shall:
 - 1. Attend themselves to the teaching of the Word of God, to fellowship, and to prayer.
 - 2. Exercise their governmental authority with regard to oversight of the spiritual programs of the church and their planning.
 - 3. Exercise their governmental authority with regard to oversight of the church facilities and their use.
 - 4. Attend to matters of church discipline in accordance with the principles of Scripture.
 - 5. Concern itself with the supply of the pulpit and call of ministers and to confer with the ministers, seeking the fruit of the preached Word among the congregation.
 - 6. Receive and supervise new members of the congregation and to concern themselves with the instruction of member candidates.
 - 7. Schedule and issue the call to the annual business meetings and make arrangements for the conducting of all business meetings.
 - 8. Assist the ministers in the instruction, counsel, and care of the congregation.
 - 9. Uphold the stated purpose and values of Grace Chapel of Clifton Park and report annually to the congregation in this regard.
 - 10. Formally appraise the pastor's performance at least once per year. A new pastor shall receive four formal appraisals within his first two years. Requirements for formal appraisals supplement and do not eliminate the need for continuing encouragement and guidance by the Elders.
- d) The Board of Elders shall elect annually from its membership the following officers:
 - 1. A Moderator who shall moderate all meetings of the Board of Elders, the joint boards, and all meetings of the Congregation/Corporation.
 - 2. A Clerk who shall record the minutes of Elder Board meetings, congregational meetings, and corporate meetings, and shall supervise maintenance of membership records.
 - 3. Such other officers and committees as may be necessary to carry on its work.
- e) The Board of Elders shall consist of a minimum of four active Elders and may be increased in size by a majority vote of the congregation.
- f) If any active elder of this church declines to act, resigns, or dies, or ceases to be a qualified voter at a congregational

or corporate meeting, the office shall be vacant. Such vacancy may be filled by the active elders, by appointment, until the next annual meeting of the church for the election of officers. At such meeting, the vacancy shall be filled for the unexpired term.

S2) The Board of Deacons

- a) The Board of Deacons shall consist of a minimum of six active Deacons and may be increased in size by a majority vote of the congregation. An active Deacon is one who is serving a current term.

The corporation treasurer shall be a member ex officio of this board.

- b) The Board of Deacons shall be responsible to the Board of Elders. This office is spiritual in nature and one of sympathy and service after the example of the Lord Jesus.
- c) The Board of Deacons shall:
1. Support and encourage the corporate and personal prayer and evangelism ministries of the church.
 2. Provide for and administer the Christian Education and visitation programs of the church.
 3. Provide for the care of the poor and needy, the sick, the friendless, and any who may be in distress, in accord with the Scriptural duties of the office.
 4. Administer the sacrament of communion at regular intervals throughout the year.
 5. Provide for the care of the church property.
 6. Provide for and execute the payment of temporal expenses.
 7. Have no power, without the consent of a duly called corporate meeting, to incur debts beyond what is necessary for the administration of the temporal affairs of the church and for the care of the property.
 8. Promote worship and assist the Missionary outreach of the church.
- d) The Board of Deacons shall elect from its membership the following officers:
1. A Moderator to moderate its meetings.
 2. A clerk to record the minutes of the Deacons Board, The Joint Board, and the meetings of the Trustees.
 3. Such officers and committees as may be necessary to carry on its work.
- e) Vacancies, between congregational meetings, shall be filled by the Board of Deacons with approval of the Board of Elders by appointment until the next annual meeting of the church for the election of officers.

ARTICLE IX: RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

S1) Cooperational Agreements

This church shall be a non-denominational community church affiliated with the National Association of Evangelicals. It may cooperate with other groups in the work of the Gospel by the decision of the Board of Elders.

S2) Property Rights (Not Amendable)

The property of this church may never be restricted or controlled in any manner by any other ecclesiastical organization whatsoever or by relationships to any other organization with the exception of an organization from which the church obtains a mortgage.

ARTICLE X: DISSOLUTION

No part of the net earnings or other assets of this church shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, member, or officer of this church, or of any private individual. No donor, member, individual, committee, associate or affiliate member, or officer of this church shall be entitled to be a recipient in the distribution of any of the assets of this church upon dissolution. Any assets of said church must be distributed or given to one or more organizations recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes, and which satisfy the original intent of Grace Chapel of Clifton Park as outlined in Article II (Purpose) of this constitution.

ARTICLE XI: AMENDMENTS

S1) Unamendable Sections (Not Amendable)

This constitution may be amended, except for Article III; Article IX, Section 2; Article XI, Section 1; and Article XII.

S2) Procedure to Amend Constitution

An amendment must first be presented to the congregation or corporation at a regularly called meeting, the public notice of which shall include the form of the proposed amendment or revision, and shall be presented to the congregation at regular worship services on the two Sundays immediately preceding the day of the meeting. After presentation of the amendment, it must be approved by a two-thirds majority of the qualified voters present. If approved, a second congregational or corporate meeting shall be duly called at least three months later, the purpose again being publicly stated. At this second meeting, the same amendment must again be presented and passed by a two-thirds majority of the qualified voters present. Thereupon, it shall become part of this constitution.

ARTICLE XII: SAVING CLAUSE (Not Amendable)

In the event that any section of this constitution shall be declared unlawful or otherwise unenforceable, such declaration shall not affect any other provisions of this constitution.

LIST OF BYLAWS WITH REFERENCE TO ARTICLES

Bylaw	Name and Affiliation	Article	Section
Bylaw 1		Article I	
Bylaw 2	Membership		
	Section 1 Classes and Interview	Article V	Section 1
	Section 2 Transfers	Article V	Section 3
	Section 3 Doctrinal View (Non-Essentials)	Article III	Section 9
	Section 4 Spiritual Gifts		
	Section 5 Voting Eligibility	Article IV	Section 2
	Section 6 Corporate Members	Article V	Section 3
	Section 7 Discipline	Article V	Section 3
Bylaw 3	Meetings		
	Section 1 Moderator and Balloting	Article IV	Section 2
	Section 2 Meeting Quorum	Article IV	Section 2
	Section 3 Meeting Call Procedure	Article IV	Section 2
	Section 4 Corporate Business Items	Article IV	Section 2
	Section 5 Annual Meeting and Fiscal Year	Article IV	Section 2
	Section 6 Mediation of Conflict	Article IV	Section 2
	Section 7 Robert's Rules	Article IV	Section 2
Bylaw 4	Officers, Ministers, and Staff		
	Section 1 Ordination	Article VI	Section 2
	Section 2 Limitation of Terms	Article VI	Section 2
	Section 3 Election and Installation	Article VI	Section 2
	Section 4 Board Relationships	Article VI	Section 6
	Section 5 Staff Relationships	Article VII	Section 6
	Section 6 Duties	Article VII	Section 6
	Section 7 Dismissal Procedure	Article VII	Section 5
Bylaw 5	Ministerial Search Process		
	Section 1 Senior Pastor	Article VII	Section 1
	Section 2 Associate Pastors	Article VII	Section 2
	Section 3 Other Ministerial Staff	Article VII	Section 3
	Section 4 The Responsibilities of the Congregation		

Bylaw 6	Boards and Committees		
	Section 1	Calling of Meetings	Article VIII Section 2
	Section 2	Board Business	Article VIII Section 2
	Section 3	Elder Committees	Article VIII Section 1
	Section 4	Nominating Committee	Article VIII Section 2
	Section 5	Deacon Committees	Article VIII Section 2
	Section 6	Trustees	Article VIII Section 2
	Section 7	Joint Boards	Article VIII Section 2
	Section 8	Committees	Article VIII Section 2
Bylaw 7	Amendments		
	Section 1	Procedure to Amend Bylaws Governing Congregation	
		Article XI	Section 2
	Section 2	Procedure to Amend Bylaws Governing Corporation	
		Article XI	Section 2

BYLAWS OF GRACE CHAPEL OF CLIFTON PARK

1. NAME AND AFFILIATION

- S1) The descriptive name of this church shall be Grace Chapel of Clifton Park, a non-denominational, congregationally governed community church.

2. MEMBERSHIP

S1) Classes and Interview

A candidate for congregational membership shall have attained the age of 16; attend membership classes as appropriate to acquaint the candidate with the creed and policies of Grace Chapel of Clifton Park; testify of one's personal experience of salvation through Jesus Christ to the Board of Elders of this church; and shall be admitted to (or prohibited from) membership by the vote of the Elders following examination.

S2) Transfers

The Board of Elders shall act on letters of transfer and all other matters pertaining to congregational membership in this church in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution and these Bylaws and such rules and procedures as that Board may adopt.

S3) Doctrinal View (Non-Essentials)

Recognizing that true believers differ on such doctrines as baptism (the mode and timing of), eschatology (the exact order of events), and the work of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer (His timing and methods), we agree as a community church not to attempt to restrict an individual member's beliefs in such areas.

S4) Spiritual Gifts

Because the Holy Spirit indwells all true believers from the moment of conversion and has given them spiritual gifts, all members are encouraged to use their gifts in ministry and acts of service so that the body may be built up.

S5) Voting Eligibility

The religious society (the congregation) shall consist of all active members in good standing, and they may vote on all ecclesiastical and corporate concerns of the church.

The religious corporation (the corporation) shall consist of those persons 18 years of age or older, who have worshipped with the church and have regularly contributed to its financial support for the year previous, and they may vote only on corporate concerns of the church.

S6) Corporate Members

Corporate members may be active in the work of the church in accordance with the provisions of the several boards except in no case shall they be allowed to hold office or serve on any officially appointed board or committee.

S7) Discipline

- a) If any member of the church or non-member who attends this church is found to be living or teaching contrary to the Word of God and the Statement of Faith of this church, he or she shall be counseled in love by the Pastor or by the Board of Elders. If efforts to bring repentance and restoration fail, then the Board of Elders will follow the procedures outlined in the Scriptures including Matthew 18: 15-18, I Corinthians 2: 5-11, and Galatians 6: 1-2.
- b) No accusation shall be considered by the church against any Elder unless supported by at least two witnesses (I Timothy 5: 19).
- c) Any member who has withdrawn or has been excluded has no right or claim upon the church property, real or personal.

3. MEETINGS

S1) Moderator and Balloting

The moderator of the congregation/corporation shall call meetings to order and shall also supervise the choosing of two inspectors of election to receive all ballots cast. The moderator and the inspectors of election shall declare the result of the ballots cast on any matter and shall be the judges of the qualifications of voters. No absentee ballots will be allowed.

S2) Meeting Quorum

A minimum of twenty percent (20%) of the members eligible to vote in attendance at any congregation /corporation meeting which has been properly announced shall constitute a quorum to conduct business.

S3) Meeting Call Procedure

The congregation/corporation shall meet at least once each year.

Congregational/corporate meetings shall be called by written request of the Board of Elders or ten congregational and/or corporate members, or at the oral request of the Board of Elders, The Deacons, or the minister(s). Such meeting will be held within four weeks from the submission of the written request unless a delay is agreed to by the requestors. The call to all congregational and /or corporate meetings shall contain the major items of business, including the names of all officers whose successors are to be elected. It shall be posted in a conspicuous place, and shall be read at regular worship services on the two Sundays immediately preceding the day of the meeting. Items of business not related to the agenda set forth or requiring further study, shall be referred to the appropriate board and/or held over to a subsequent meeting.

S4) Corporate Business Items

The following business shall be transacted only at a properly called meeting of the corporation (membership determined by Bylaw 2, S4):

1. Purchase, lease, or disposal of property. These items shall require a majority vote of the corporate membership present at a duly called meeting.
2. Election of Trustees or Treasurers to fill expired or vacated terms, or additional new offices voted by the corporation. This shall be by majority vote of the corporate membership present at a duly called meeting.
3. All other business not specifically delegated to corporate meetings may be properly dealt with in congregational meetings. The matters dealt with by the religious corporation are limited to the non-ecclesiastical, temporal concerns of the church.

S5) Annual Meeting and Fiscal Year

The annual meetings of the congregation and corporation shall be scheduled to occur before the end of the church fiscal year. The fiscal year shall begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

S6) Mediation of Conflict

If a conflict exists within the church of a nature to threaten the unity, peace, and purity of the church, and all internal attempts (Elder Board and congregational meetings) toward resolution have failed, an outside panel of evangelical leaders may be called to provide assistance.

This procedure may be initiated by a petition presented to the Board of Elders, which contains the signature of at least one-third of the active church membership.

The mediation panel shall be comprised of members selected by mutual consent of the delegates representing both sides. The panel may be chosen from the pastors and/or church leaders of the local evangelical community, and, if desired, past ministers of this church, or an existing body whose purpose is to mediate such matters.

S7) Robert's Rules

Robert's Rules of Order, revised, latest edition, shall be final on all procedural questions not otherwise stipulated in this constitution or these bylaws, or not determined by a two-thirds vote of the congregation.

4. OFFICERS, MINISTERS, AND STAFF

S1) Ordination

Each Elder or Deacon shall be duly ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands of the ministers and the Elders. Elders and Deacons duly ordained shall normally hold status for life, whether serving in office or not.

S2) Limitation of Terms

With the exception of the Corporation, Missions, and Recording Treasurers, no officer shall be elected to succeed himself or herself more than once, or to serve in any office for more than six consecutive years. He or she shall be limited by the greater provisions of this article. No officer shall serve as a member of more than one board at the same time.

S3) Election and Installation

Officers shall be elected as early in each church fiscal year as is consistent with the overall program of the church. They shall be installed as soon as convenient thereafter. In any case, they shall serve from the time of their election.

S4) Board Relationships

The ministers shall be subject to the Board of Elders counsel and through that Board, and/or directly, shall be responsible to the congregation. The associate or assistant minister(s) shall serve under the direction of the senior Pastor and be accountable to the Board of Elders.

S5) Staff Relationships

Staff members shall serve under the direction of the Senior Pastor or Pastor's designate and be accountable to the Board of Elders. This article also applies to the head of each church organization.

S6) Duties

The duties of the ministers and members of the staff shall be further detailed by the Boards to which they are responsible.

S7) Dismissal Procedure

A pastor shall serve an unlimited term unless other arrangements are made at the time the call is accepted. If a Pastor should depart radically from the Word of God in conduct or in doctrine as described in the basic statement of faith of the church, or if the Pastor's sustained performance is found unacceptable, then the Elders shall admonish in love with the full intention of better equipping the Pastor for service to God. Should this not have the desired result, said Pastor may be discharged by action of the church. If congregational action is required, a Pastor shall have the right to give a position statement before the congregation. After hearing the presentation of reasons for recommended dismissal, the Pastor shall leave the meeting at the time of voting. The dismissal vote shall be by secret ballot. No absentee ballots will be allowed.

5. MINISTERIAL SEARCH PROCESS

S1) Senior Pastor

- a) When the Senior Pastorate becomes vacant, or intention thereof is given, the Board of Elders shall nominate a pulpit committee, subject to congregational approval, consisting of at least one member of each Board (four maximum) and members of the congregation at large up to the number of eleven total. The committee shall be composed of spiritually mature members and, to the extent possible, shall reflect a balanced cross section of the church. A position guide for the vacancy shall be developed by the Board of Elders. The Pulpit Committee shall develop an assessment of the strengths and needs of the congregation relative to this open Pastoral position. The Pulpit committee shall use this assessment in their search and interview process. The Board of Elders shall recommend qualified persons to the congregation for a Pulpit Committee. Nominations may be made from the floor. The congregation shall elect a Pulpit Committee to secure suitable candidates. The congregation has a continuing duty to uphold the Pulpit Committee in prayer, and the Pulpit Committee shall advise the congregation of its activities on a monthly basis. The Pulpit Committee and the congregation shall respect the right to privacy of individual candidates.
- b) The Elder Board's representative shall serve as chairman. The pulpit committee shall thoroughly check the background credentials and past performance of any candidate prior to recommendation. The names of any candidates recommended by this committee shall be submitted to the Board of Elders. The pulpit committee will not normally present any candidate who is judged not to possess at least minimal educational requirements (college plus three years of seminary).
- c) Candidates shall be presented to the Elder Board and the congregation one at a time. All candidates shall be given adequate opportunities to become acquainted with the congregation and shall be interviewed by the Board of Elders. Candidates for Senior Pastor shall have the opportunity to preach at one or more church services as directed by the Board of Elders. Candidates for Associate Pastor may or may not be asked to preach at the direction of the Board.
- d) When the Board of Elders decides to recommend a candidate, a call for a congregational meeting shall be made. The recommendation will be presented with all of the supporting reasons for suggesting the candidate. The congregation shall then vote by secret ballot as to whether it desires to send a call to the recommended candidate. No absentee ballots will be allowed. If the candidate receives a two-thirds majority vote of the members present, the call shall be extended, accompanied by a relocation and salary package approved by the congregation at the meeting. If not, the Pulpit Committee shall resume its search. Each candidate shall be voted upon at a duly called meeting following the candidate's visit.

- e) The Board of Elders shall notify the candidate of the extending of the call immediately, and, upon receipt of an affirmative reply, make arrangements for moving and for the candidate's installation.

S2) Associate Pastors

- a) When an Associate Pastorate position becomes vacant, or is proposed, the Board of Elders shall appoint a Search Committee. The members of this committee shall consist of the Board of Elders, or a member of the Board of Elders along with other members of the congregation.
- b) If the Elder Board does not act as the Search Committee, the Elder Board's representative shall serve as chairman. The pulpit committee shall thoroughly check the background credentials and past performance of any candidate prior to recommendation. The names of any candidates recommended by this committee shall be submitted to the Board of Elders.
- c) When the Board of Elders decides to recommend a candidate, a call for a congregational meeting shall be made. The recommendation will be presented with all of the supporting reasons for suggesting the candidate. The congregation shall then vote by secret ballot as to whether it desires to send a call to the recommended candidate. If the candidate receives a two-thirds majority vote of the members present, the call shall be extended, accompanied by a relocation and salary package approved by the congregation at the meeting. If not, the Pulpit Committee shall resume its search. Each candidate shall be voted upon at a duly called meeting following the candidate's visit.
- d) The Board of Elders shall notify the candidate of the extending of the call immediately, and, upon receipt of an affirmative reply, make arrangements for moving and for the candidate's installation.

S3) Other Ministerial Staff

- a) When other Ministerial Staff positions become vacant, or are proposed, the Board of Elders shall appoint a Search Committee. The members of this committee shall consist of the Board of Elders, or a member of the Board of Elders along with other members of the congregation.
- b) If the Elder Board does not act as the Search Committee, the Elder Board's representative shall serve as chairman. The pulpit committee shall thoroughly check the background credentials and past performance of any candidate prior to recommendation. The names of any candidates recommended by this committee shall be submitted to the Board of Elders.
- c) The Board of Elders is empowered to act on the Search Committee's recommendation and extend a call in compliance with all congregational approved budgetary considerations.

S4) The Responsibilities of the Congregation

- a) During the search process, the congregation shall support with prayer the efforts of the Search Committee.
- b) During the candidates' meetings with the congregation, members shall evaluate the candidate openly and honestly and listen carefully for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.
- c) The congregation shall uphold the Associate Pastors and/or Ministerial Staff in prayer and shall exercise spiritual gifts in mutual encouragement, development, support, and growth of personal and corporate ministries, as well as the ongoing work and activities of the church.

6. BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

S1) Calling of Meetings

It is the responsibility of the Moderator of any Board to call a meeting of said Board. In the absence or inability of such to act, the clerk of the Board may act in his place.

S2) Board Business

The business of individual Boards of the church is to be conducted in private. Items of interest to the congregation will be discussed at the Monthly Joint Boards meeting and published in the minutes of that meeting. Monthly meetings of the

Deacon Committees and the Joint Boards are open to all interested members of the congregation. Any member in good standing has the right to a hearing before any Board of the church upon submitting written request.

S3) Elder Committees

In addition to any committee listed in this Constitution, the Elders should normally appoint the following committees: Membership; Nominating; and such others as may be necessary.

S4) Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee shall consist of seven members. There shall be one representative of each Board and the remaining members chosen from the congregation at large. The representative of the Elders shall be Chairman and shall submit the proposed slate of nominees to the Elders prior to the annual election of officers. In the case of vacancies on the Elder and Deacon Boards, the Nominating Committee shall submit at least one more candidate than the number of vacancies to be filled. When the slate of names is approved by the Elders, it shall be submitted to the congregation/corporation. The list of approved nominees shall be posted at the time of the first reading of the call to the congregational meeting. Regular members are encouraged to submit names for consideration by the Committee or the Board of Elders. Nominations may be received at the congregation/corporate meeting provided the person declares his or her willingness to serve and meets the qualifications stated in Article VI, Section 2 of this constitution. To be elected, his or her candidate must receive at least 51% of the ballots cast. Vote will be by secret ballot.

S5) Deacon Committees

Deacons, in accordance with their spiritual gifts, shall be elected by the congregation to chair the following normally appointed committees:

- 1) Family Ministries,
- 2) Christian Education,
- 3) Outreach Ministries,
- 4) Finance,
- 5) Worship and Music,
- 6) Missions,
- 7) Facilities Management, and
- 8) Such others as may be necessary.

The monthly meeting of all Deacon Board committees shall normally be scheduled on the same evening to facilitate joint planning and exchange of information. The annual budget for the calendar year shall be drawn up by the Finance Committee, with information outside their areas of responsibility supplied by the appropriate Board or Committee. The Church Treasurer and the Missions Treasurer shall be an ex officio member of the Finance and Missions Committees respectively. The Treasurer(s) and Collector(s) shall be bonded for such amounts as shall be determined by the Finance Committee. The Board of Deacons shall also appoint three of its members to serve as Trustees of the Religious Corporation. Deacons not selected to chair a committee will serve as a member of one of the Deacon committees. The moderator of the Deacons Board shall oversee the working of all the Deacon committees and will meet quarterly with the Elders to review plans, share assessments, and make recommendations. The Deacons shall be subject to the counsel of the Board of Elders in the event of disagreement on a policy or course of action; any Board involved may call for a joint meeting.

S6) Trustees

Trustees of the Religious Corporation shall consist of the following members: The moderator and the clerk of the Deacon Board, who will function as the Moderator and the clerk of the Trustees; the Church Corporate and Recording Treasurer, and three members selected from the Board of Deacons.

The Trustees shall have no power to lease, incur debts, or dispose of church property real or personal, in any fashion without an affirmative majority vote of the Corporate members present at a duly called corporate meeting. The Trustees shall represent the Religious Corporation in all legal matters. The Trustees shall annually appoint a competent auditor who shall examine in accordance with accepted procedure the books of the church (including Missions). The report of findings

shall be printed in summary form and made available to the congregation. Such meeting shall be for the purpose of discussion and expression of opinion only.

S7) Joint Boards

Regular Joint meetings of the boards shall be for the purpose of reporting the activities and recommendations of the various boards and committees of the Church, the expression of opinion, exchange of information, and the sharing of items for prayer and encouragement in ministry.

The program of the church will normally be planned three months in advance. The Pastor(s) plus the moderators of the Elder and Deacon Boards and the Chairmen of the major Deacon committees shall meet quarterly to schedule the special services and program events of the church.

S8) Committees

The responsibilities of each committee shall be determined by the board to which it reports unless otherwise stated in the Constitution or Bylaws of this church. The chairman of each committee is responsible for staffing the committee and calling all special committee meetings. No committee will normally have more than three officers (Elders and Deacons) in its membership or less than five members total. Membership is for a term of one year, renewable annually. No officer may serve a term as the chairman of any committee of the boards or the church, which lasts for more than three consecutive years. No employee with the exception of the minister(s) of the Church, shall be eligible to serve on any committee or Board having supervision over or general concern with their particular position. All committee recommendations involving changes to the services, programs, or personnel, etc., are to be submitted to the Elders for approval prior to implementation.

7. AMENDMENTS

S1) Procedure to Amend Bylaws Governing Congregation

Bylaws, governing the actions of the religious society and its officers, may be adopted, amended, or revoked by a two-thirds vote of qualified members present and voting at any congregational meeting. Specific notice shall have been given at the posted call to such meeting.

S2) Procedure to Amend Bylaws Governing Corporation

Bylaws, governing the actions of the religious corporation and its Deacons (Trustees), may be adopted, amended, or revoked by two-thirds vote of the qualified voters present and voting at any corporate meeting, after written notice, embodying such Bylaws or amendments, has been openly given at a previous meeting, and also in the notices of the meeting at which such proposed Bylaws or amendments are to be acted upon.