

**CONSTITUTION  
GRACE CHURCH  
A Baptist Fellowship  
15670 90<sup>th</sup> Street NE  
Otsego, MN 55330**

**ARTICLE 1 – NAME**

The name of this church shall be Grace Church of Otsego, Minnesota. Grace Church is a Baptist Fellowship.

**ARTICLE 2 – PURPOSE AND PRIORITIES**

The purpose of this church shall be to honor and glorify God by promoting the worship of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; by systematically proclaiming and teaching the Word of God; by bringing the lost to a saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; by providing opportunity for believers to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ; by obeying, as God enables, the commission of our Lord in missionary endeavor both at home and abroad; by aiding in the establishment of churches of like faith and practice; by perpetuating the ordinances; and by preserving and earnestly contending for the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith.

**ARTICLE 3 – GOVERNMENT**

This church acknowledges Jesus Christ as its only head and the New Testament as its only infallible guide in matters of faith and government. Its government is invested in its assembled membership.

The church, though autonomous, may fellowship with organizations of like faith and practice. No obligations or commitments shall be made to such bodies which call for more than voluntary action on the part of the church. Any such fellowship can be broken at any time by majority vote of members present and voting at any regular or specially called meeting.

The pastors and deacons are the elected officers of the church and as servants of the church are subject at all times to its corporate action. Due to his divine calling, the senior pastor, in the discharge of his pastoral duties shall have freedom of action and ministry and be primarily accountable to God.

**ARTICLE 4 – CHURCH COVENANT**

Having as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him; and on the profession of our faith, having been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God, the holy angels, and this assembly, relying on our Lord's gracious aid, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ. (Matt 28:19; John 1:12; 3:16; 15:5; Acts 2:38; 8:36-38; 10:48; 16:31-34; Rom 12:1, 4-5; 1 Cor 12:14-27; Eph 2:8; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 5:21)

WE PLEDGE therefore to walk together in brotherly love, exercising affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonishing and entreating one another as occasion may require; to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness, and comfort; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to promote its vitality and spirituality; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad. (Matt 16:17; 18:15-17; 28:19-20; Luke 10:7; Acts 2:42; Rom 15:5-6; 1 Cor 1:10; 11:23-26; 16:2; 2 Cor 1:3-4; 3:5; 8:14; 9:7; Gal 5:13; 6:2, 6, 10; Eph 4:11-14; Phil 2:3-4; Col 3:16; 1 Thess 5:15; Heb 10:24-25; Jas 5:16; 2 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:10)

WE ALSO PLEDGE to maintain family and personal devotions; to bring up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord those who may at any time be under our care; and as ambassadors of Christ, by a pure and loving example, to seek the salvation of our family, friends, and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful

in our engagements, and exemplary in our conduct; to avoid all gossiping, backbiting, unrighteous anger, and other manifestations of unchristian conduct towards others; to avoid all addictive behaviors and other such activities which dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the work of our Savior. (Deut 6:7-12; Prov 20:1; 22:6; 23:29-32; 26:20; Matt 6:6; 12:36; 28:19-20; Luke 18:1; John 15:16; Acts 1:8; Rom 1:30; 9:3; 1 Cor 6:12-20; 10:31; 15:58; 2 Cor 5:20; Eph 4:1, 26-32; 5:8-11, 18; 6:4; Phil 3:16-18; Col 3:17; 1 Thess 5:22; 2 Tim 3:15; 1 Pet 2:12; 1 John 2:15)

WE FURTHER PLEDGE to remember each other in prayer; to aid each other in sickness and distress; to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and courtesy in speech; and to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and, mindful of the commandments of our Savior, to secure it without delay. (Matt. 18:15, 21-22; Rom 12:13, 15; 14:19; 1 Cor 6:7; Eph 6:18; Phil 4:16; Col 3:17; 4:6; Heb 13:18; Jas 3:9, 10, 13; 1 John 3:17-18)

WE MOREOVER PLEDGE that when we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with a church of like faith and practice, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word. In the event there is no such church, we shall seek with the Lord's help to establish one. (Acts 9:19; 11:19-21; 18:27; Rom 16:1-2; Gal 1:9; Heb 10:25)

## **ARTICLE 5 – ARTICLES OF FAITH**

### **Section 1: The Bible**

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God. Its sixty-six books are fully inspired, infallible, and without error in the original manuscripts, written by men superintended by the Holy Spirit. We further affirm that the New Testament is the final authority for the faith and conduct of the church. (2 Sam 23:2; John 10:35; 14:26; 16:12-13; 17:17; Acts 1:16; 2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:19-21; 3:15-16; Jude 3)

### **Section 2: The Trinity**

We believe there is only one true God, eternally existing in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. While distinct in function, these Persons are equal in every divine attribute. (Matt 3:16-17; 28:19; John 10:30; 14:10; 16:13; 1 Cor 11:3; 2 Cor 13:14; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:3-14; Phil 2:5-6)

### **Section 3: God the Father**

We believe in God the Father, who rules sovereignly over the affairs of mankind, knows infallibly all that will come to pass, and intervenes supernaturally in His creation as He chooses. We believe that God directly created the physical universe, all spirit beings, mankind, and all other forms of life in six solar days, without any evolutionary process and without the use of preexisting matter, as recorded in the literal and accurate history of Genesis. God sustains all creation and continues to work within it, but in His being transcends time and space. (Gen 1-2; Ps 77:14; 139:4, 16; Prov 21:1; Matt 5:35; John 1:3, 12; 8:41-44; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 1:4; 4:10; Col 1:15-17; Rom 11:33-36; Heb 1:3; Rev 4:11; 13:8; 17:8)

### **Section 4: God the Son**

We believe in Jesus Christ, the eternal and only begotten Son of God. He is fully God and fully man, His two natures being inseparably united in the incarnation. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, atoned for the sins of mankind through the substitutionary sacrifice of His death, rose bodily from the tomb, and has ascended into Heaven as the believer's Advocate and High Priest. He will return for the Church at the Rapture, and later will return again to reign on earth following the Tribulation. (Matt 1:18-25; 24:30-31; Luke 1:26-38; 24:1-6; John 1:1-2, 14, 18; 8:58; 1 Cor 15:1-8, 51-52; Phil 2:5-11; Col 3:1; 1 Thess 4:13-18; 1 Tim 2:6; Titus 2:13-14; Heb 1:8; 4:14; 1 John 2:1)

### **Section 5: God the Holy Spirit**

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. He regenerates, indwells, progressively sanctifies believers, and also provides a guarantee of their future salvation. We believe He gives spiritual gifts to believers as He wishes, but does not presently bestow miraculous gifts such as prophecy, tongues, and healing. (John 15:26; 16:7-11; Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 6:19-20; 2 Cor 3:18; 12:12; 13:14; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13; Titus 3:5; Heb 2:4)

## Section 6: Angels

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless spirit beings, or angels, who are real and possess personality. One of these, though created holy by God, sinned and led a host of angels in rebellion against God. Though this fallen angel, known as Satan or the Devil, is the god of this age and the ruler of all the powers of darkness, he and the entire company of fallen angels, are destined to eternal punishment in the lake of fire. Holy angels continue to serve God as ministering spirits. (Matt 4:11; 25:41; Rom 8:38-39; 2 Cor 4:3-4; Col 1:16; Heb 1:14; 12:22; 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6; Rev 12:7-9; 20:10)

## Section 7: Salvation

We believe that God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of all mankind as a demonstration of His love. Jesus the God-man lived a sinless life, took upon Himself the sins of the world, and paid the penalty of sin which each person deserved to receive. Man does not naturally seek after God, but God works through His Holy Spirit to draw to salvation all those chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Salvation is therefore all of God, yet He gives man the responsibility of trusting Him. A sinner is converted when he believes in the gospel (the death and resurrection of Christ), turning in repentance from sin and in faith toward God. The believer is judicially declared righteous by God when Christ's righteousness is applied to the converted sinner. Those who have genuinely trusted Christ cannot lose their salvation, for they are kept by God's power. God gives His Holy Spirit to believers as the guarantee of salvation. While believers are progressively sanctified in this life, in the presence of Christ the believer will be finally delivered from the presence of sin. (John 1:29; 3:16; 6:37; 10:27-30; 16:8-11; Acts 13:48; 16:31; Rom 3:10-18, 21-26; 5:1, 6-12; 6:23; 7:14-25; 8:29-39; 2 Cor 1:21-22; 5:14-15; Gal 5:16; Eph 1:13-14; 2:8-9; 5:1-10; Phil 3:9; 1 Thess 1:9; 1 Tim 2:5-6; Titus 3:5; Heb 9:27; 1 Pet 1:3-5; 2 Pet 3:18; 1 John 2:1; Rev 21:27; 22:3)

## Section 8: Mankind

We believe that man was created holy in the image and likeness of God, but by the voluntary transgression of Adam the race fell. All are now sinners, wholly defiled and by nature utterly void of that holiness required by God. All people are disposed to sin, alienated from God, and under His just and eternal condemnation. Mankind is totally depraved, without excuse, and unable to remedy his lost condition. (Gen 1:26; Ps 51:5; Rom 1:20; 3:9-18, 23; 5:12; 6:20; Eph 2:1-3, 12; Col 1:21; Titus 3:3)

Human Sexuality. Distinctions in masculine and feminine roles are ordained by God as part of the created order. We believe that the Bible attributes to men and women distinct roles of equally high value and dignity. We moreover affirm male headship in the family and male leadership in the church. 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, transvestism, 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. We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman. (Gen 1:26-27; 19:5, 13; 2:24; 3:16-17; 26:8-9; Deut 22:5; Matt 19:4-6; Rom 1:26-27; 1 Cor 5:1; 6:9; 7:10; 11:3, 8-9; Eph 5:3, 5; 21-33; Col 3:18-19; 1 Thess 4:1-8; 1 Tim 2:11-15; Heb 13:4)

## Section 9: The Church

We believe that the Church is composed of all true believers in Jesus Christ, and is distinct from the nation of Israel. A local, visible church is an organized congregation of immersed believers, associated by a covenant of faith and by fellowship in the gospel. A true church preaches a pure gospel, rightly administers the ordinances, and disciplines its members. It is congregational in government and autonomous in nature. A local assembly has two offices, those of pastor and deacon. Its two ordinances are baptism by immersion and the regular observance of the memorial of the Lord's Supper. A church ought to refuse to collaborate with those who depart from the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, as well as those who tolerate such departure. (Matt 16:17-20; 28:16-20; Acts 1:8; 2:41-42; 10:47-48; Rom 11:23-26; 1 Cor 12:12-13; Eph 1:22; 4:7, 11-16; 5:30; Phil 1:1; Col 1:16; 2 Tim 4:2-4; Heb 10:25; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 10, 11; Jude 3)

Baptism. Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Savior, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a

testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Baptism is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper. (Matt 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 3:23; Acts 2:41; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; Rom 6:3-5; Col 2:12)

The Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming. (Matt 26:26-30; 14:22-26; 22:19-20; Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16, 21; 11:23-29)

#### Section 10: Future Events

We believe in the bodily resurrection and subsequent judgment of both the righteous and the wicked. The righteous will live forever in Heaven, while the wicked will receive the just punishment of eternal, conscious torment in the Lake of Fire. We believe that Jesus Christ may come at any time to gather the Church from the earth into His presence. Then God will judge the earth during a seven-year Tribulation, which will culminate in the public return of Jesus to establish His kingdom on earth for one thousand years. (Isa 35:1-7; Mal 3:18; John 3:16-18; Rom 11:26-27; 1 Cor 15:51-57; 2 Cor 5:8; Phil 3:20-21; 1 Thess 4:13-18; Titus 2:13; Rev 6:17; 19:11-20:6; 20:7-15; 21:1-3)

### **ARTICLE 6 – MEMBERSHIP**

Section 1: Admission to Membership. Persons may be received into church membership by majority vote of the church in the following ways:

- A. By profession of faith followed by baptism;
- B. By testimony of salvation and previous baptism;
- C. By restoration. Members of this church whose membership has been dropped due to discipline may, upon evidence of repentance and recommendation of the pastor and deacons, be restored to membership by majority vote of the church.

All members shall accept the doctrinal statement, affirm the church covenant, and abide by the Constitution of the church.

Section 2: Privileges and Responsibilities of Membership. Members will endeavor to preserve the unity of the church, and, if at any time they find themselves unchangingly opposed to these documents, they will not seek to disrupt the fellowship of the church.

In accord with the duties outlined in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only members of this congregation shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the pastor and deacons.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend all members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 3: Termination of Membership. Membership in this church may be terminated in any of the ways listed below. Persons who have been removed from the membership of the church by whatever means shall have no right to make claim to any church property and shall return any such property in their possession immediately.

- A. Death. The names of deceased members shall be automatically removed from the membership.
- B. Transfer of Membership. Any member joining another church shall be removed from the membership of this church by majority vote of the congregation.
- C. Voluntary Withdrawal. Any member may request to terminate his own membership for reasons sufficient to himself. Any such request must be approved by a vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members, unless a church discipline process has been initiated.

D. Discipline.

(1) Purpose of Discipline. Discipline in any form shall have as its purpose the purity of the church and the restoration of the erring member (1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 6:1).

(2) Procedure of Discipline. Should any member become an offense to the church in doctrine, morals or conduct; or by persistent breach of his covenant vows; or by gross impropriety; or by misdeed in his office or by willfully promoting schism or discord in the church, he may have his membership terminated by the church following the pattern of Matt 18:15-17. Before bringing the matter to the church, the pastor and deacons shall hear all evidence that may be produced on both sides. If the accused is a pastor or deacon, he shall not be involved in handling the matter. Then, if necessary, a special congregational meeting shall be called, at which time the pastor and deacons' recommendation(s) shall be voted upon. A two-thirds majority of the members present and voting shall be required for a decision, which decision shall be final.

E. Inactivity. Any member who moves away for permanent residence should, in keeping with the covenant, transfer his membership. If after one year the member has not joined another church, the church shall vote to terminate the individual's membership unless sufficient cause exists to retain it.

Members who are shut-in or who will be away from their home for a period of time, whether in the military, "snowbirding," away for college, etc., will not be considered for quorum purposes in their absence. They will retain their right to vote if present at a business meeting.

Members who do not attend at least two services per month for a period of three months without adequate cause will be placed on the Inactive Membership list by the pastor and deacons, unless satisfactory explanation of such absence has been given to and accepted by the pastor and deacons. An inactive member shall lose the right to vote or hold office. Inactive members may be reinstated to active membership and full church privileges after demonstrating three months of faithful attendance and sincere efforts to fulfill their church covenant obligations. They should notify the pastor and deacons of their desire to be reinstated to active membership. The pastor and deacons shall make the decision concerning reinstatement and shall notify the inactive members when their membership status has been changed to active.

If any member remains on the Inactive list for a period of six months, the church shall attempt to notify the inactive member of pending church action. He may then be recommended to the church for exclusion from the membership of the church at a regularly called business meeting.

**ARTICLE 7 – CHURCH OFFICES**

**Section 1: The Senior Pastor.**

A. Qualification. Any candidate for the senior pastor of the church shall be a man who meets the requirements as set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. He shall be dedicated to upholding and carrying out the spirit and letter of this Constitution. He must be spiritually and educationally qualified to lead the church as an undershepherd of Christ, to preach, to teach, to administer the ordinances, and to provide leadership in carrying out the spirit and letter of the New Testament through the local church. He shall be an ordained Baptist minister, or willing to become ordained shortly after occupying the office.

B. Calling. The pastor shall be called with an affirmative ballot vote of at least three-fourths of the congregation following the unanimous recommendation of the pulpit committee. The pulpit committee shall have at least five members, and the total number of members must be uneven. At least three of these members shall be deacons, unless the church has fewer than three deacons. The deacons shall recommend additional nominees to the pulpit committee as necessary, which nominees shall be approved by majority vote of the congregation. The pulpit

committee shall bring only one man at a time to the church. The church will vote on the candidate at a meeting which shall be announced from the pulpit at regularly scheduled services on the two Sundays prior to the meeting.

The pastor shall agree to the doctrinal statement, affirm the church covenant, and abide by the Constitution of the church. He shall reaffirm his agreement annually verbally and in writing at the annual business meeting. Any differences which he holds concerning these documents should be submitted in writing to the pulpit committee which shall be evaluated by the pulpit committee as to whether they preclude him from serving as the pastor.

C. Care. The senior pastor shall be held in high esteem (1 Thess 5:12-13; Heb 13:17) as an undershepherd of Christ (Eph 4:11-14; 1 Tim 5:21, 17-19; 1 Pet 5:1-6). Moreover, the church is responsible to care for the pastor, bearing in mind the Scriptural admonitions to care for God's man (1 Cor 9:9-11; 1 Tim 5:17-18). Compensation, vacation, benefits, and time to hold or attend special meetings away from the church shall be determined by agreement between the pastor and deacons and shall be reviewed annually.

D. Duties of the Senior Pastor. Upon assuming his pastoral duties, the pastor and his wife shall become members of the church. It is God's design that the pastor exercises his Biblically ordained oversight of this church and its ministries. He serves as the undershepherd of Christ, the Chief Shepherd, and thus the pastor's primary accountability for his ministry is to Christ. The duties of the pastor are well-defined in the New Testament and include, but are not limited to, those listed below.

(1) As Pastor, he shall lead the flock by example and by the faithful teaching and preaching of Scripture. He shall tenderly watch over the members of the flock and their spiritual well-being, praying diligently for them. He shall organize and develop their strength for the most fruitful service according to God's purpose and their spiritual giftedness. He shall guard the flock, watching and warning against false doctrines, teachers, and methods.

(2) As Elder, he shall uphold the dignity of the office by demonstrating humility, maturity, and wisdom in his leadership.

(3) As Overseer, he shall have oversight over all aspects of the ministry and functioning of this church, administering not by constraint, but by encouraging a willing participation from the church members.

(4) The senior pastor shall preach the Gospel and the whole counsel of God continually. He will give himself to the study of Scripture. He shall personally supervise the worship service, teaching, music, and pulpit ministries of the church.

(5) The senior pastor shall normally administer the ordinances of the church.

(6) The senior pastor may, at his discretion, be the moderator at all meetings of the church for the transaction of business, except in the cases where the business to be transacted is of such a nature to involve him personally.

(7) The senior pastor may, at his discretion, be a member of all committees and boards, except for the pulpit and auditing committees.

(8) The senior pastor shall have oversight of all other pastors.

(9) The senior pastor shall lead in the outreach program to reach the community with the Gospel, as well as in the visitation ministry of the church.

(10) The senior pastor shall lead in the use of Biblical church discipline, in order to glorify God, to preserve the purity of the church, and whenever possible to restore the sinning member.

(11) The senior pastor shall present a written report of the overall ministry of the church at each annual business meeting.

(12) The senior pastor may recommend and appoint other service positions, with congregational approval.

E. Term of Office of the Senior Pastor. The pastor shall serve for an indefinite period of time. He may be terminated by a two-thirds majority vote at a church meeting called for that purpose. If the pastor is dismissed, he shall vacate the pulpit immediately, but shall receive thirty days' pay. If living in a parsonage, he shall vacate within thirty days or according to other arrangements made by the deacons. The pastor may terminate his services with a written notice of at least thirty days and not to exceed sixty days unless otherwise agreed upon by the deacons.

F. Suspension. If allegations of immoral conduct, doctrinal error, or serious misconduct in official duties by the pastor are presented in writing by at least two witnesses and the allegations are such that they would harm the public ministry of the church if the pastor were to continue in the pulpit, the deacons shall meet immediately to discuss possible suspension of the pastor. If the deacons unanimously vote to recommend suspension to the congregation, the deacons shall attempt to notify eligible voting members of the congregation that at the next church service where there is a quorum, the congregation will act on the recommendation. At the meeting the deacons shall present the allegations. The pastor may address the congregation if he chooses. If two-thirds of the eligible voting members present vote for the suspension, the pastor will be suspended immediately from all duties. Following an affirmative vote on suspension, a special business meeting on termination will be called by the deacons to be held two to four weeks following an affirmative vote on suspension. During the pastor's suspension the deacons will arrange for speakers at church services. The pastor's normal compensation and benefits, except for professional expense reimbursement, will be continued during the suspension. A two thirds vote by the congregation is required to end the suspension of the pastor and reinstate him to fulfill his pastoral duties.

Section 2: Associate Pastors. According to the needs of the church and within the limits of the approved budget, the senior pastor may search for and recommend additional staff members to assist in various aspects of the church's ministry. His relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. The senior pastor shall be responsible for determining the duties of and recommendation of such pastoral staff members. The church will ratify the associate pastor by a three-fourths majority ballot vote.

An associate pastor shall meet the qualifications for pastoral ministry as stated above for the senior pastor. He shall agree to the doctrinal statement, affirm the church covenant, and abide by the Constitution of the church. He shall reaffirm his agreement annually verbally and in writing at the annual business meeting. Any differences which the candidate holds concerning these documents should be submitted in writing to the senior pastor, who shall determine whether they preclude the candidate from serving as an associate pastor. All associate pastors and their wives shall become members of Grace Church. The associate pastor shall serve for an indefinite period of time. The associate pastor may terminate his services with a written notice of at least thirty days and not to exceed sixty days unless otherwise agreed upon by the senior pastor. He may be terminated by a two-thirds majority vote at a church meeting called for that purpose.

Section 3: Pastoral Assistants. According to the needs of the church and at the discretion of the senior pastor, pastoral assistants shall be appointed from among the congregation only. These shall be godly men who have expressed a desire for and evidenced a call to vocational pastoral ministry. These shall not be pastors but shall assist the senior pastor and associate pastor(s) in the duties of pastoral ministry. The senior pastor shall be responsible for determining the duties and recommendation of pastoral assistants. The church will ratify the pastoral assistant by a three-fourths majority ballot vote. The pastoral assistant shall be subject to a triennial affirmation by the congregation. Pastoral assistants shall serve at the will of the senior pastor.

#### Section 4: Deacons.

- A. Qualifications of Deacons. The deacons shall be men in full communion with the church, of mature judgment and unquestionable Christian character, loyal to the Word of God, willing servants of the church, and are devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and to the spiritual welfare of the congregation. Their character shall reflect the requirements stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 and shall be manifested in faithful attendance of all regular services of the church, unless providentially hindered; they shall be separated unto God from the world, shall support the church with their tithes and offerings, and shall be in agreement with the position, direction, and leadership of the church. A deacon shall have been an active member of this church for at least six months.
- B. Election of Deacons. The number of deacons shall be determined by the senior pastor based on the need according to the size of the church and the number of men who meet the scriptural qualifications as described above. Names of candidates for the office of deacon shall be set forth by the nominating committee. They shall normally be elected

at the annual meeting of the church by a majority vote of the congregation, for a term of office of three years, so classified that one third, if possible, shall be elected each year. A deacon may serve two consecutive terms and then must take a one-year sabbatical before serving again.

- C. Duties of Deacons. Scripture is very general as to the duties of deacons. Deacons shall assist by serving in a subordinate role to the senior pastor in supervising aspects of the church's affairs, including, but not limited to, the material, spiritual, financial, and legal health of the church. The congregation recognizes that the delegation of administration to the deacons is in line with a Biblical principle (Acts 6:1-6) and renders the operation of the church more efficient while preserving the New Testament teaching of church government. They shall give counsel and advise the pastor regarding the oversight of his ministry. They shall elect from among themselves a chairman and a secretary. They are at all times servants of the church and subject to its corporate action. The deacons shall administer the benevolence fund and prepare, with the treasurer, an annual budget to present to the congregation. They may not sell, mortgage, or otherwise encumber the real estate of the church without congregational approval.
- D. Deacons shall fulfill such responsibilities as are normally required of the directors of non-profit corporations in the State of Minnesota. The deacons shall be the legal directors of this corporation.

### **ARTICLE 8 – OTHER CHURCH POSITIONS**

Service positions assist the church in the efficient and orderly administration of its affairs. The positions listed below serve such purposes. Other service positions may be recommended and appointed by the senior pastor, with congregational approval.

#### **Section 1: Deaconesses.**

- A. Qualifications of Deaconesses. The deaconesses shall be women in full communion of the church, of mature judgment and unquestionable Christian character, loyal to the Word of God and devoted to the Lord Jesus Christ and the spiritual welfare of the church. Since the Scriptures indicate that there are only two offices of the church, pastor and deacon, deaconesses are not to be viewed as officers. They are rather godly women who assist the pastor and deacons in the ministry.

Their character shall reflect the virtues found in passages such as Prov 31:10-31; 1 Tim 3:11; and 1 Pet 3:1-6. They shall faithfully attend all regular services of the church, unless providentially hindered. They shall be separated unto God from the world; shall support the church with their tithes and offerings; and shall be in agreement with the position, direction, and leadership of the church. A deaconess shall have been an active member of this church for at least six months.

- B. Election of Deaconesses. The number of deaconesses shall be determined by the senior pastor based on the need according to the size of the church and the number of women who evidence godliness of character as described above. Names of candidates for Deaconess shall be set forth by the nominating committee. They shall normally be elected at the annual meeting of the church by a simple majority ballot vote, for a term of three years, and so classified that one third, if possible, shall be elected each year. A deaconess can serve two consecutive terms and then must take a one-year sabbatical before serving.

**Section 2: Church Clerk.** The clerk shall make and preserve a record of all church procedures; keep full minutes of the church at its business meetings; and shall make and revise each year's roster of church members, including dates of admission and severance of membership by any reason, including an inactive member list. The clerk shall be the custodian of historical documents and records, conduct church correspondence, and prepare and publish church reports and notices. When the position is vacant, the congregation shall elect a church clerk at the next business meeting, or a special meeting called for that purpose.



Section 3: Financial Secretary. The financial secretary is responsible to the deacons, whose duties shall be to receive and keep a suitable record of all contributions and offerings and to promptly deposit them in such bank account(s) as may be designated by the deacons. This person shall issue receipts to contributors. When the position is vacant, the congregation shall elect a financial secretary at the next business meeting, or a special meeting called for that purpose. The term of the financial secretary is unlimited, subject to the will of the congregation.

The administration of receiving, counting and recording receipts is left to the discretion and convenience of the financial secretary, subject to the approval of the deacons, but with the stipulation that two persons are required to count and make initial record of all monies received. The financial secretary may delegate the routine work to assistants as needed, if approved by the deacons, but shall maintain the record of individual pledges and contributions and provide an annual report of those records.

Section 4: Treasurer. The treasurer shall manage the church funds, pay bills in a timely manner as directed by the pastor and deacons and/or the church, and maintain appropriate documentation for such payments. The treasurer shall provide financial reports to the pastor and deacons monthly or as requested. When the position is vacant, the congregation shall elect a treasurer at the next business meeting, or a special meeting called for that purpose. The term of the treasurer is unlimited, subject to the will of the congregation.

## **ARTICLE 9 – COMMITTEES AND ORGANIZATIONS**

Section 1: Nominating Committee. The nominating committee will be the pastor and deacons. If fewer than three in number, the church may add to the committee. All nominations must go through this committee. No nominations will be accepted from the floor unless a special exception is allowed by the pastor or deacons.

Section 2: Pulpit Committee. The pulpit committee shall carefully examine the pastoral candidate as to his salvation, doctrine, Christian conduct, finances, organization associations, and call to ministry. If he has served in other churches, his ministry there should be explored. The pulpit committee shall be responsible to notify the candidate of the vote, extend a call if the vote so warrants, and to make arrangements for his moving. The call and acceptance shall be confirmed in writing.

Section 3: Other Committees. Committees (including, but not limited to missions, building, and the like) may be expedient to the administration of the overall ministry of this church. These committees shall be determined by need and created under the direction of the pastor and deacons. These committees shall be recommended by the pastor and deacons, approved by the membership, and appointed by the pastor and deacons. Committee members shall have been an active member of this church for at least six months. Each committee appointment shall be for a term of one year and is subject to reappointment on an annual basis. In the event of a premature vacancy on the committee, the pastor and deacons may appoint a qualified person to a vacated role by request of the committee without congregational approval. All committees of the church shall be required to give a full and written report of the work done during the year. These reports shall be submitted no later than one month prior to the annual business meeting and shall be approved by the pastor and deacons prior to meeting.

Section 4: Ministries. The church may have within it various ministries such as a Christian education program and its classes, men's and women's groups, youth groups, and choirs. All such groups shall be considered integral parts of this church and shall not utilize personnel nor follow procedures that are contrary to the church's Constitution. Such ministries shall be approved by the pastor and deacons and shall be under the supervision of the senior pastor. All ministry leaders shall be members in good standing of the church. Any person ceasing to be a member of the church shall automatically forfeit any place of leadership in a church ministry and shall return all records, properties, or assets thereof to the church. All ministries of the church shall be required to give a full and written report of the work done during the year. These reports shall be submitted no later than one month prior to the annual business meeting and shall be approved by the pastor and deacons prior to meeting.

## ARTICLE 10 – MEETINGS

Section 1: Business Meetings. Quarterly business meetings shall be held in January, April, July and October. The October business meeting shall normally include the adoption of the annual budget as one of its purposes. The annual business meeting shall take place during a service in January. The purpose of this meeting shall be the election of officers, the distribution of annual reports, and the consideration of any other such business as seems appropriate.

Section 2: Rules For Transaction of Business. The church may transact business at any of its regular services, provided announcement has been made as to the nature of the business at no fewer than two previous Sunday services. This requirement shall not include the reception and dismissal of members, which may be done at any service without previous announcement. Special business meetings may be called by the pastor or the duly-appointed moderator of the church, if the church is without a pastor, or by a petition of at least fifteen percent of the voting members.

Normal matters of business to be presented to the congregation shall come by way of recommendation from the pastor or deacons. Church action at all business meetings shall be determined by a majority vote of the voting members present and voting except as otherwise specified in this Constitution. No proxy or absentee voting shall be permitted. Twenty-five percent of the voting members shall constitute a quorum for annual or quarterly meetings. This quorum shall not apply to the dismissal or reception of members. The election of the senior pastor, associate pastors, and all other elected personnel shall be by a written ballot. They shall assume their duties effective immediately. Voting members shall be members in good standing at least 18 years of age.

The senior pastor may, at his discretion, be the moderator at all meetings of the church for the transaction of business, except in the cases where the business to be transacted is of such a nature to involve him personally in which case the chairman of the deacons or someone else appointed by the senior pastor shall preside. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary guide in all matters of business unless otherwise specified in this Constitution. All other voting may be done by the method called for by the presiding officer, except as otherwise directed by the wishes of the congregation.

Section 4: Services. The church shall meet each Sunday for public worship. The senior pastor may designate other meetings for the blessing and edification of the body. It shall be the practice of this church to observe the Lord's Supper at least once each quarter. The church covenant shall be read regularly, usually during a communion service.

## ARTICLE 11 – FINANCIAL

Section 1: Auditing Committee. An auditor or auditing committee shall be chosen annually by the deacons no later than one month following the close of the fiscal year. The auditor or auditing committee shall oversee or conduct an audit of the church finances by the end of the first quarter of the following fiscal year.

Section 2: Designated Donations. From time to time the church, in the exercise of its religious, educational, and charitable purposes, may establish various funds to accomplish these specific goals. Contributors may suggest uses for their contributions, but all such suggestions shall be deemed advisory rather than mandatory in nature. No fiduciary obligation shall be created by designation contribution made to the church other than to use the contribution for the general furtherance of any purpose or priorities stated in Article 2.

Section 3: Spending Authority. Unbudgeted expenditures up to \$500 may be approved by the pastor and deacons. Unbudgeted expenditures greater than \$500 must be approved by the church, except in emergencies. Any spending that exceeds 10% of the annual budget on emergencies must be approved by the congregation.

Section 4: Fiscal Year. The church fiscal year shall begin on January 1<sup>st</sup> and end on December 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **ARTICLE 12 – LICENSING AND ORDINATION**

As a sovereign Baptist church the congregation has authority to license and to ordain upon a two-thirds vote of the voting members present and voting at a meeting called for that purpose.

Section 1: Licensing. Any member who evidences a divine call to preach the Gospel may be recommended to the church for licensing after an examination by the pastor and deacons. He shall be in whole-hearted agreement with the doctrinal position of the church. He shall preach at least once before the church. The license shall be for a specific period of time and shall be void at the end of that period or upon the member's removal from the church membership.

Section 2: Ordination. This church recognizes the fact that only God can call a man to the ministry of the gospel but believes it both Scriptural and wise to have such a man commended to the gospel ministry by a local church. Following an examination by an ordination council the church may proceed with a public ordination service.

## **ARTICLE 13 – POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

No substantial part of the activities of this ministry shall be the carrying on of propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation nor shall this ministry participate in, or intervene in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.

## **ARTICLE 14 – NONDISCRIMINATION**

Grace Church welcomes all people of any race, color, national origin, age, disability, or gender to worship with us.

## **ARTICLE 15 – AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended, altered, or revised when deemed necessary. Any amendment or additional articles must be submitted to the pastor and deacons and, if approved by that body, be presented to the church congregation in writing at least two Sundays prior to a meeting called for the purpose of acting on the amendment. This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths vote of those present at any regular or specially called meeting for that purpose. Amendments approved shall become effective immediately unless other provision is made by action of the church. A Constitutional review committee shall be appointed every five years from the date of the initial adoption of this Constitution by the pastor and deacons consisting of no fewer than three and no greater than five members, for the purpose of reviewing this Constitution for possible amendments. Any amendments shall follow the procedure outlined above.

## **ARTICLE 16 – DISSOLUTION**

The title of all real estate and personal property acquired by purchase, deed, gift, transfer, inheritance, or other conveyance shall be held and administered by the deacons in the name of Grace Church of Otsego, organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Minnesota. In case the church is ever dissolved, the properties of said organization will revert only to a church or church organization believing unequivocally in the stated doctrine of Grace Church. Dissolution may occur by a three-fourths vote of the members present at a meeting called for this purpose.

No part of the net earnings of this corporation shall ever inure to the benefit of any donor, director, or officer of the corporation or any private individual, and no donor, member, director, or officer or any private individual shall be entitled to share in the distribution of corporate assets.

Upon dissolution, its assets will be, after paying and making provision for payment of all the liabilities of the ministry, distributed to one or more organizations of like faith and practice recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as one organized exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, literary, or educational purposes.

Adopted October 21, 2007

Revised June 29, 2014

Name change from Bible  
Baptist of Elk River to  
Grace Church of Otsego  
October 2018

Name change from Grace  
Church of Otsego  
to  
Grace Church of Otsego  
A Baptist Fellowship  
December 2019