



| GRACE  
| FELLOWSHIP  
| CHURCH

# **CONSTITUTION**

(Revised and Approved March 1, 2020)

**Grace Fellowship Church**  
1760 Williston Avenue  
Waterloo, Iowa

## Contents

CONSTITUTION .....	2
PREAMBLE .....	3
ARTICLE I - NAME .....	3
ARTICLE II - MISSION .....	3
ARTICLE III - CHARTER.....	3
ARTICLE IV - COVENANT .....	4
ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP .....	7
Section 1. Qualifications .....	7
Section 2. Duties .....	7
Section 3. Privileges.....	8
Section 4. Termination.....	8
ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT .....	9
Section 1. Elder Board .....	9
Section 2. Officers .....	11
Section 3. Standing Commissions and Ministries.....	15
Section 4. Congregational Business Meetings.....	15
ARTICLE VII - ORGANIZATIONS .....	16
ARTICLE VIII - DISSOLUTION .....	16
ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS .....	16
ARTICLE X - AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO LEGAL CONTRACTS .....	16
ARTICLE XI - CANCELLATION .....	17
AMENDMENT I .....	17

# CONSTITUTION

## PREAMBLE

The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Apostle Paul, says, *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* (I Corinthians 14:40) Therefore, to better set forth our position before the world, define our relationship one with another, facilitate the orderly transaction of business, conduct our various activities and promote harmony and cooperation between the members of our boards and organizations, we, the members of the Grace Fellowship Church adopt and accept the following Articles to be the Constitution of this church. Bylaws and any other documents shall be supportive of, and shall not conflict with, this Constitution.

## ARTICLE I - NAME

This congregation shall be known as the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa.

## ARTICLE II - MISSION

### *OUR MISSION*

*“Impacting our changing world with the unchanging message of Grace”*

**G**rowing together in unity (Fellowship)

**R**esponding to God in heart and action (Worship)

**A**ctively serving God (Servant Leadership / Ministry)

**C**ontinually growing in Christ (Discipleship)

**E**xtending the Good News (Evangelism)

## ARTICLE III - CHARTER

The primary authority by which this church exists as an ecclesiastical body is received from the Holy Scriptures and in all matters of faith and practice, acknowledges no others. But it recognizes and sustains the obligations of mutual counsel and cooperation which are common among the churches of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

The secondary authority is by the laws of the State of Iowa under which this church is incorporated.

## ARTICLE IV - COVENANT

The Covenant by which this church exists, as a distinct body, and which every member accepts, is as follows:

- a. Acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, and accepting the Holy Scriptures as our final rule of faith and practice, and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship, the observance of Christian ordinances, the public worship of God, and for the advancement of the work of His Church on earth, we do now in the sight of God and invoking His blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves together as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as warranted by the Word of God.
- b. We agree to maintain the instruction of the Bible, to submit ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of the church, and to walk together in brotherly love. This we do, depending upon the aid of our Heavenly Father who so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation; and upon Jesus Christ who hath redeemed us with His blood; and upon the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide.
- c. We understand the basic content of our preaching and teaching to be the Holy Scriptures as summarized by The Statement of Faith (*following page*) as held by Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches which we embrace and pledge ourselves to preach and defend.

### Statement of Faith Of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches

We of the Waterloo Grace Fellowship Church, along with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, believing the Bible the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible to be the infallible rule of faith and of practice, and feeling the responsibility to make known the divine message of the Bible, present the following articles as a statement of those basic truths taught in the Bible which are common to our Christian faith and practice:

#### The Holy Scriptures

We believe in THE HOLY SCRIPTURES: accepting fully the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the very Word of God, verbally inspired in all parts and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God, altogether sufficient in themselves as our only infallible rule of faith and practice (Matt. 5:18, John 10:35, 12:42, 17:17, 2 Tim. 3:16, 2 Pet. 2:21).

#### The One Triune God

We believe in THE ONE TRIUNE GOD; who is personal, spirit and sovereign (Mark 12:29, John 4:24, 14:9, Psa. 135:6); perfect, infinite, and eternal in his being, holiness, love, wisdom and power (Psa. 18:30, 147:5, Deut. 33:27); absolutely separate and above the world as its Creator, yet everywhere present in the world as the Upholder of all things (Gen. 1:1, Psa. 104); self-existent and self-revealing in three distinct Persons--the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (John 5:26, Matt. 28:19, 2 Cor. 13:14), each of whom is to be honored and worshipped equally as true God (John 5:23, Acts 5:3-4).

### The Lord Jesus Christ

We believe in THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: who is the Second Person of the Triune God, the eternal Word and Only Begotten Son, our great God and Savior (John 1:1, 3:16, Tit. 2:13, Rom. 9:5); that, without any essential change in His divine Person (Heb. 13:8), He became man by the miracle of Virgin Birth (John 1:14, Matt. 1:23), thus to continue forever as both true God and true Man, one Person with two natures (Col. 2:9, Rev. 22:16); that as Man He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15, John 8:46); that as the perfect Lamb of God He gave Himself in death upon the Cross, bearing there the sin of the world, and suffering its full penalty of divine wrath in our stead (Isa. 53:5-6, Matt. 20:28, Gal. 3:13, John 1:29); that He rose again from the dead and was glorified in the same body in which he suffered and died (Luke 24:36-43, John 20:2528); that as our great High Priest He ascended into heaven, there to appear before the face of our God as our Advocate and Intercessor (Heb. 4:14, 9:24, I John 2:1).

### The Holy Spirit

We believe in THE HOLY SPIRIT: who is the Third Person of the Triune God (Matt. 28:19, Acts 5:3-4), the divine Agent in nature, revelation and redemption (Gen. 1:2, Psa. 104:30, I Cor. 2:10, 2 Cor. 3:18); that He convicts the world of sin (John 16:8-11), regenerates those who believe (John 3:5), and indwells, baptizes, seals, empowers, guides, teaches, and sanctifies all who become children of God through Christ (I Cor. 6:19, 12:13, Eph. 4:30, 3:16, Rom. 8:14, John 14:26, I Cor. 6:11).

### Creation and Fall of Man

We believe in THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN; that he was the direct creation of God, spirit and soul and body, not in any sense the product of an animal ancestry, but made in the divine image (Gen. 1:26-29, 2:7, 18-24, Matt. 19:4, I Thess. 5:23); that by personal disobedience to the revealed will of God man became a sinful creature and the progenitor of a fallen race (Gen. 3:1-24, 5:3), who are universally sinful in both nature and practice (Eph. 2:3, Rom. 3:23, 5:12), alienated from the life and family of God (Eph. 4:18, John 8:42-44), under the righteous judgment and wrath of God (Rom. 3:19, 1:18), and have within themselves no possible means of recovery or salvation (Mark 7:21-23, Matt. 19:26, Rom. 7:18).

### Salvation by Grace Through Faith

We believe in SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH: that salvation is the free gift of God (Rom. 3:24, 6:23) neither merited nor secured in part or in whole by any virtue or work of man (Tit. 3:5, Rom. 4:4-5, 11:16), but received only by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16, 6:28-29, Acts 16:30-31, Eph. 2:8-9), in whom all true believers have as a present possession the gift of eternal life, a perfect righteousness, sonship in the family of God, deliverance and security from all condemnation, every spiritual resource needed for life and godliness, and the divine guarantee that they shall never perish (I John 5:13, Rom. 3:22, Gal. 3:26, John 5:24, Eph. 1:3, 2 Pet. 1:3, John 10:27-30); that this salvation includes the whole man, spirit and soul and body (1 Thess. 5:23-25); and apart from Christ there is no possible salvation (John 14:6, Acts 4:12).

### Righteous Living and Good Works

We believe in RIGHTEOUS LIVING AND GOOD WORKS: not as the procuring cause of salvation in any sense, but as its proper evidence and fruit (1 John 3:9-11, 4:19, 5:4, Eph. 2:8-10, Tit. 2:14, Matt. 7:16-18, 1 Cor. 15:10); and therefore as Christians we should keep the word of our Lord (John 14:23), seek the things which are above (Col. 3:1), walk as He walked (1 John 2:6), be careful to maintain good works (Tit. 3:8), and especially accept as our solemn responsibility the duty and privilege of bearing the Gospel to a lost world in order that we may bear much fruit (Acts 1:8, 2 Cor. 5:19, John 15:16); remembering that a victorious and fruitful Christian life is possible only for those who have learned they are not under law but under grace (Rom. 6:14), and who in gratitude for the infinite and undeserved mercies of God have presented themselves wholly to Him for His service (Rom. 12:1-2).

### The Existence of Satan

We believe in THE EXISTENCE OF SATAN: who originally was created a holy and perfect being, but through pride and unlawful ambition rebelled against God (Ez. 28:13-17, Isa. 14:13-14, 1 Tim. 3:7); thus becoming utterly depraved in character (John 8:44), the great Adversary of God and His people (Matt. 4:1-11, Rev. 12:10), leader of all

other evil angels and spirits (Matt. 12:24-26, 25:41), the deceiver and god of this present world (Rev. 12:9, 2 Cor. 4:4); that his powers are supernaturally great, but strictly limited by the permissive will of God who overrules all his wicked devices for good (Job 1:1-22, Luke 22:31-32); that he was defeated and judged at the Cross, and therefore his final doom is certain (John 12:31-32, 16:11, Rev. 20:10); that we are able to resist and overcome him only in the armor of God and by the Blood of the Lamb (Eph. 6:12-18, Rev. 12:11).

#### The Second Coming of Christ

We believe in THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: that His return from heaven will be personal, visible and glorious—a Blessed Hope for which we should constantly watch and pray, the time being unrevealed but always imminent (Acts 1:11, Rev. 1:7, Mark 13:33-37, Tit. 2:11-13, Rev. 22:20); that when He comes He will first by resurrection and translation remove from the earth His waiting Church (1 Thess. 4:16-18), then pour out the righteous judgments of God upon the unbelieving world (Rev. 6:1-18:24), afterward descend with His Church and establish His glorious and literal kingdom over all the nations for a thousand years (Rev. 19:1-20:6, Matt. 13:41-43), at the close of which He will raise and judge the unsaved dead (Rev. 20:11-15), and finally as the Son of David deliver up His Messianic Kingdom to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24-28), in order that as the Eternal Son He may reign forever with the Father in the New Heaven and the New Earth (Luke 1:32-33, Rev. 21:1-22:6).

#### Future Life, Bodily Resurrection, and Eternal Judgment

We believe in FUTURE LIFE, BODILY RESURRECTION AND ETERNAL JUDGMENT: that the spirits of the saved at death go immediately to be with Christ in heaven (Phil. 1:21-23, 1 Cor. 5:8), where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until His second coming, when their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His own glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21, 1 Cor. 15:35-58, 1 John 3:2), at which time their works shall be brought before the Judgment Seat of Christ for the determination of rewards, a judgment which may issue in the loss of rewards, but not the loss of the soul (1 Cor. 3:8-15); that the spirits of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades, where they are kept under punishment until the final day of judgment (Luke 16:19-31, 2 Pet. 2:9 ARV), at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave, they shall be judged according to their works, and cast into the place of final and everlasting punishment (Rev. 20:11-15, 21:8, Mark 9:43-48, Jude 13).

#### One True Church

We believe in THE ONE TRUE CHURCH: the mystical Body and Bride of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 4:4, 5:25-32), which He began to build on the Day of Pentecost (Matt. 16:18, Acts 2:47) and will complete at His second coming (1 Thess. 4:16-17); and into which all true believers of the present age are baptized immediately by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12-13 with 1:2); that all the various members of this one spiritual Body should assemble themselves together in local churches for worship, prayer, fellowship, teaching, united testimony, and the observance of the ordinances of our Lord (Heb. 10:25, Acts 2:41-47), among which are the following: The Baptism of believers by Triune Immersion (Matt. 28:20), the Laying on of Hands (1 Tim. 4:14, 2 Tim. 1:6), the Washing of the Saints' Feet (John 13:1-17), the Lord's supper or Love-feast (1 Cor. 11:17-22, Jude 12 ARV), the Communion of the Bread and Cup (1 Cor. 11:23-24), and Prayer and Anointing for the Sick (Jas. 5:13-18).

We understand that the above Articles do not by any means exhaust the content of our creed which is the whole Word of God, and they are not intended to set a limit beyond which faith cannot go within this Word; but we do believe that in so far as these Articles extend they are a true presentation of the sound doctrine taught in the Scriptures, and therefore binding upon us as Christian believers.

## **ARTICLE V - MEMBERSHIP**

### **SECTION 1. QUALIFICATIONS**

Any person who has:

- a. confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and received Him as Lord and Savior;
- b. publicly submitted to the authority of the Bible as the complete, final, inerrant, and inspired revelation of the Triune God to man;
- c. been baptized in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, (This church practices only Triune immersion, but membership may be granted to believers who have been immersed otherwise);
- d. consented to the covenants and provisions of this Constitution and its Bylaws;
- e. attended and participated in a membership class or equivalent as designated by the Elder Board;

is qualified to become a member of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa.

After all requirements have been fulfilled, the person's name shall be submitted to the Elder Board for approval for membership. Their name will then be added to the membership rolls and they shall be introduced to the congregation at the earliest convenient time.

The transfer of membership from another Grace Brethren Church shall be recognized upon completion of a membership class or equivalent as designated by the Elder Board and Elder Board approval.

### **SECTION 2. DUTIES**

Members are encouraged to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to growth in Christian living. These include:

- a. Daily Bible reading and prayer
- b. Family Worship
- c. Regular attendance at all church services and Business Meetings
- d. Participation in the Communion Ordinances
- e. Loyalty to Christ and His church
- f. Contributing financially to the support of the local church, and its missionary and benevolent programs
- g. Participation in the organized work of the local church

### **SECTION 3. PRIVILEGES**

All members who are in active fellowship and who are sixteen years of age and over are eligible to vote in all business meetings of the church.

Any member who feels a dissatisfaction with the general procedure of any department of this church shall make known his case to the Elder Board in writing. No verbal complaints shall be entertained before the Elder Board. If any grievance deals with a difficulty with another member of the church, Matthew 18:15-19 will form the basis of procedure to follow towards resolution and reconciliation.

All members who are in active fellowship with this church (as outlined under SECTION 2. DUTIES) are eligible to hold an office in the church.

All members who are in active fellowship with this church (as outlined under SECTION 2. DUTIES) are eligible to serve as a delegate to district and national conferences. This church shall recognize and submit to the regulations for delegates as prescribed by district and national conferences.

### **SECTION 4. TERMINATION**

#### **A. Transfer of Membership**

A certificate of membership may be granted upon written request from the receiving church, to any member in good standing, by a majority vote of all members present at any regular congregational business meeting or by the Lead Pastor or Elder Board provided that announcement of such request has either been made from the pulpit or printed in the church bulletin or clearly posted for two Sundays one week previous to the granting of the certificate, and that no objection has been raised by any member of the church. Should an objection be raised, said objection must be filed in writing with the Elder Board, whereupon the Board shall investigate the cause of objection. If the objection still stands after investigation, the Board shall recommend the action which it deems wise to the congregation.

No certificate shall be issued except to an organized body of Christian believers. The certificate is to be transferred by United States mail.

The member to whom the certificate is granted is considered released immediately upon the granting of the same, and the Elder Board shall remove the member's name from roll.

#### **B. Resignation**

A member's name will be removed from the roll upon the written request of the member involved. The Elder Board shall remove the member's name from the roll upon receiving such a letter of resignation.

If the member submits a letter of resignation while under the process of church discipline the congregation will be informed of the nature of the discipline action at a specially called members only meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to complete the church discipline process with the membership according to Matt 18 and 1 Cor 5 with the goal of restoring the individual to fellowship.

#### **C. Dismissal**

In the following areas; participation (9 covenant points)

When members shall fail to give evidence of vital interest in the church after due efforts have been made by the proper officials of the church to encourage their interest, and if this condition shall prevail for one year, their names may be removed from the roll through the action of the Elder Board.

If any member of this church be opposed to any of the Bible doctrines as accepted and practiced by this church and uses his or her influence contrary to the best interests of the church, or

If found walking disorderly, he or she may be excommunicated for Scriptural reasons. All such cases shall first be investigated by the Elder Board who shall give such member due hearing. After every effort to restore them (See: Matthew 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; Hebrews 3:13; 10:23-25) has failed the Elder Board shall then make recommendation of excommunication to the body of the church. A three-fourths majority by written ballot of all members present at any regularly authorized congregational business meeting shall be necessary for such excommunication.

#### **D. Death**

Membership is automatically terminated upon death. The Elder Board shall remove the member's name from the roll.

## **ARTICLE VI - GOVERNMENT**

### **SECTION 1. ELDER BOARD**

The Elder Board shall be made up of the Lead Pastor, all Associate Pastors and Lay Elders. Only men who have been approved by the congregation as elders may serve on this board.

#### **1. Method of Selection**

The Elder Board shall submit for congregational approval at the annual election a sufficient number of names to fill the expired terms on their board. It is recommended that there be no less than 6 lay elders in addition to the pastor(s). Additional positions may be created by recommendation of the Elder Board and the approval of the congregation. Each elder shall serve a three-year term with the terms of office established so that only a portion of the board shall be changed in any given year.

If an Elder has served two consecutive terms and if other men are available to serve, that Elder will be encouraged to voluntarily step down as a sitting Elder for a period of at least one year in order to provide for the development of new leadership.

After serving a 3-year term but before serving another 3-year term the Elder Board must approve and then submit the current Elder name to the congregation for their approval.

If an Elder is being asked to serve the remainder of another Elder's term, that would be considered a full term for the new Elder so the staggered terms stay consistent.

Refer to the document "Elder Guidelines and Procedures" for more direction.

A vote of confidence shall be defined as a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present at a meeting called for that purpose.

#### **2. Duties**

This board shall be responsible for the oversight of all matters of church life and practice. It shall provide general supervision for all boards, ministries and commissions in the church. In addition to the duties specified elsewhere in this Constitution and its Bylaws, the Elder Board shall:

- a. Keep the business, conduct, and programs of the church in proper spiritual perspective. This board shall be responsible to guard the testimony and doctrinal position of the church.
- b. Review annually the membership roll and approve candidates for membership and baptism.

- c. Deal with matters relating to church discipline.
- d. Establish and appoint committees as may be necessary in the conduct of the business of the church. All committees which are to function longer than one year must have congregational approval.
- e. Make recommendation to the congregation on an annual budget as compiled by the Business Commission, review and appraise monthly reports on budget and giving.
- f. Submit a written report semi-annually to the congregation on all major decisions made in the conduct of their business.
- g. Review brief monthly summary reports from all boards, ministries and commissions.
- h. Project church growth and needs, be responsible for long range planning, and implement methods and specifics for meeting those needs.
- i. Make decisions of arbitration and judgment and overrule any board, ministry or commission if such is deemed necessary for the welfare of the church.
- j. Make recommendations to the congregation about additions to the pastoral staff.
- k. Delineate responsibilities for each board, ministry and commission.
- l. Seek to give support to the pastoral staff and to serve as a united mind in helping them carry out their duties as noted in Article VI, Sections 2.B.4 and 2.C.4.
- m. Appoint a Moderator to conduct and preside over congregational business meetings.
- n. Appoint an auditing committee of no less than 3 members to examine the financial records of the church. Their duties are defined in their job description found in the Policies and Job Descriptions document.
- o. Appoint a Recording Secretary to keep a complete record of all official business at regular and special meetings of the church.

### **3. Elder Board Meetings**

- a. A two-thirds quorum shall be necessary for the Elder Board to conduct business.
- b. The Board shall meet regularly for prayer, study of Scripture, business matters, and the receiving of reports from the various boards, ministries, commissions, and organizations of the church.
- c. Meetings of the Elder Board may be called by the Lead Pastor, the moderator of the Elder Board or a majority of the sitting Lay Elders.
- d. All votes at Elder Board meetings shall require a unanimous vote for passage on all issues.

### **4. Confirmation**

- a. A confirmation of the oversight of the Elder Board shall be attested by:
- b. Congregational approval by a vote of confidence on pastors, elders, deacons, deaconesses, and all voting members of ministries and standing commissions.
- c. Congregational approval on all financial indebtedness, operating budgets, and all salaries paid by the church.
- d. Congregational approval of any and all amendments to this Constitution and its Bylaws.

- e. The Board may at any time request the voice of the congregation on matters of particular significance.

## **5. Termination**

An Elder may terminate his office and service to the Elder Board by a written resignation to the Elder Board.

If a charge is brought against an Elder for immorality, insubordination, teaching or behavior contrary to the Statement of Faith (Article IV) and, after an investigation these charges by the Elder Board are found to be true, this shall be cause for immediate termination from the Elder Board.

## **6. Vacancy**

If a vacancy occurs and the number of remaining lay elders is less than six, the Elder Board shall seek to fill the unexpired term by presenting a name of a qualified candidate to the congregation for approval by vote of confidence.

## **SECTION 2. OFFICERS**

The officers of this church shall be as follows:

### **A. Elders**

#### **1. Qualifications**

The Scriptural qualifications for an Elder are listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Anyone confirmed to this office must have been a member of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches for eight years or a member of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa for four years.

#### **2. Call**

The congregation shall select its own elders according to the Scriptural qualifications set forth in the passages listed above. Any member sensing God's call to this office may present himself to the Elder Board and upon their recommendation the name shall be submitted to the church for congregational approval.

It is the responsibility of the members of the congregation as well as the Elder Board to be sensitive to men who meet the qualifications for elder and to encourage them to make application.

Once a man has become an approved elder, he remains an elder eligible for service on the Elder Board unless that privilege is recalled by congregational vote or if he no longer fits the qualifications of an elder as defined in the qualifications, Article VI, Section 2.a.1.

All pastors are to be considered as elders.

If recognition of the elder is to be extended beyond this congregation, the normal procedures of licensure and ordination as provided for by the Iowa - Midlands Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches shall be followed.

#### **3. Duties**

An elder can exercise authority only as it is granted to him by the congregation as provided for in this Constitution.

#### **4. Termination**

See Article VI, Section 1.4.

## **5. Vacancy**

See Article VI, Section 1.5.

## **B. Lead Pastor**

### **1. Qualifications**

The Lead Pastor of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa must adhere absolutely to the Statement of Faith (Article IV) as outlined in this Constitution. He must meet the Scriptural qualifications for elders as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He must become a recognized elder in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches through licensure and ordination as provided for by the Iowa - Midlands Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches. He must become a member of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa.

### **2. His Call**

The initial call of the Lead Pastor shall be for a period of three (3) years. A vote of confidence for the Lead Pastor must take place before or at the 3 year mark of the initial calling. Thereafter, both the Lead Pastor and the congregation will rely on the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit by means of a yearly evaluation conducted by the Elder Board with input from the Congregation. The results of the evaluation will be reported to the congregation at the annual meeting. If desired, a vote of confidence may be initiated either by the Lead Pastor, Elder Board or by a member of the congregation. A member of the congregation may initiate a call for a vote of confidence at any time by a written request submitted and sustained by the Elder Board. A vote of confidence shall be defined as a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present at a meeting called for that purpose.

### **3. Chain of Command and Accountability**

The Lead Pastor shall be directly responsible to the Elder Board.

The Lead Pastor shall be considered a member of the pastoral team at Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa.

The Lead Pastor shall be considered an ex officio member of all commissions, ministries and committees.

In the absence of the Lead Pastor, the Elder Board shall assign duties as necessary to fulfill the needs of this office.

### **4. His Duties**

The Lead Pastor shall consider his primary responsibility to be that of preaching and teaching the Word of God, prayer, edifying the saints, and setting a good example of Christian conduct.

The Lead Pastor's Scriptural responsibilities are as follows:

- a. To lead: I Pet. 5:3; Heb. 13:7, 17, 24
- b. To rule: I Tim. 3:4-5; 5:17; I Pet. 5:2-3
- c. To shepherd the flock: I Pet. 5:2, 5; Acts 20:28-30

d. To teach: II Tim. 2:15; 4:2-4

e. To equip the saints to do the work of ministry: Eph. 4:12; I Pet. 4:10

## **5. Termination**

The Lead Pastor, being an at-will employee, may voluntarily terminate his position by submitting a written notice to the Elder Board providing a ninety (90) days advance notice of his date of termination. The Elder Board may excuse the Lead Pastor from the ninety (90) days notice at their discretion.

If, at any time, any member of the church senses an opposition to the leadership of the Lead Pastor, the Lead Pastor shall be informed of this opposition by the Elder Board and an appropriate investigation will be made by the Elder Board. If immorality, insubordination or teaching contrary to the Statement of Faith is substantiated after an appropriate investigation by the Elder Board, termination will be immediate.

## **6. Vacancy**

If a vacancy occurs in the pastorate, one candidate at a time shall be considered and recommended to the members of the congregation by the Elder Board. A three-fourths majority vote of the members present at a meeting called for that purpose shall be necessary for the initial call.

## **7. Reference**

The job description and Employment Agreement for the Lead Pastor shall be determined by the Elder Board and shall be kept on file in the church office.

## **C. Associate Pastors**

### **1. Qualifications**

The Associate Pastors of this church shall adhere absolutely to The Statement of Faith as outlined in this Constitution and must meet the Scriptural qualifications for elders as outlined in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. He must become a member of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa. He will be encouraged to become a recognized elder in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches through licensure and ordination as provided for by the Iowa - Midlands Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

### **2. His Call**

The initial call of the Associate Pastor(s) shall be for a period of three (3) years. A vote of confidence for the Associate Pastor(s) must take place before or at the 3-year mark of the initial calling. Thereafter, both the Associate Pastor(s) and the congregation will rely on the leadership and direction of the Holy Spirit by means of a yearly evaluation conducted by the Elder Board with input from the congregation. The results of the evaluation will be reported to the congregation at the annual meeting. If desired, a vote of confidence may be initiated either by the Associate Pastor(s), the Elder Board or a member of the congregation. A member of the congregation may initiate such a vote of confidence at any time by a written request submitted and sustained by the Elder Board. A vote of confidence shall be defined as a two-thirds majority vote of all voting members present at a meeting called for that purpose.

### **3. Chain of Command**

The Associate Pastors of this church shall be directly responsible to the Elder Board.

All Associate Pastors shall be considered members of the pastoral team of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo.

In the absence of an Associate Pastor, the Elder Board shall assign duties as necessary to fulfill the needs of the office.

#### **4. His Duties**

The Associate Pastors shall serve the church in those responsibilities as assigned to them by the Lead Pastor and the Elder Board and as described in their job description and employment agreement.

The job description and Employment Agreement for each Associate Pastor shall be determined by the Elder Board and shall be kept on file in the church office.

#### **5. Termination**

An Associate Pastor, being an at-will employee, may voluntarily terminate his position by submitting a written notice to the Elder Board and to the congregation providing ninety (90) days advance notice of his date of termination. The Elder Board may excuse him from the ninety (90) days notice at their discretion.

If, at any time, any member of the church senses a rising opposition to the leadership of an Associate Pastor, the Associate Pastor shall be informed of that opposition by the Elder Board and an appropriate investigation will be made by the Elder Board. In the case where immorality, insubordination, or teaching contrary to the Statement of Faith is substantiated after an appropriate investigation by the Elder Board, the termination shall be immediate.

#### **6. Vacancy**

If a vacancy occurs in an Associate Pastorship, the Elder Board shall determine if the position is to be filled. If so determined, one candidate at a time shall be considered and recommended to the body of the church by the Elder Board. A three-fourths majority vote of the members present at a meeting for that purpose shall be necessary for the initial call.

### **D. Deacons and Deaconesses**

#### **1. Qualifications**

The congregation shall select Deacons and Deaconesses from the membership of the church according to the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:3-6; Romans 16:1. Deacons and Deaconesses must adhere absolutely to the Statement of Faith (Article IV) as outlined in this Constitution. Anyone elected to this office must have been a member of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches for eight years or a member of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa for four years. The number of deacons and deaconesses shall be set by recommendation of the Elder Board.

#### **2. Call**

At such time that the Elder Board deems a need for additional Deacons and Deaconesses, the Board shall consider the names of individuals whom they deem spiritually qualified for such an office on the basis of the standard set forth in I Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:3-6; and Romans 16:1. After due examination, the Board shall recommend to the church body those who are qualified for a vote of confidence. The initial vote of confidence shall be for a term of three years. Thereafter, both deacons and deaconesses and the congregation shall rely on the leadership and direction of the

Holy Spirit by means of a vote of confidence every three years. After serving two consecutive full terms, should other men and women be available to serve, deacons and deaconesses will be encouraged to voluntarily decline re-election for a period of not less than one year in order to provide for the development of new leadership.

### **3. Duties**

Deacons and Deaconesses shall serve under the supervision of the Lead Pastor and the Elder Board as prescribed in this Constitution and its Bylaws.

### **4. Termination**

A Deacon or a Deaconess may terminate his recognition by a written resignation to the Lead Pastor or Elder Board. Immorality, insubordination, and teaching contrary to the Statement of Faith shall be cause for immediate termination if substantiated after an appropriate investigation by the Elder Board.

### **5. Vacancy**

If a vacancy occurs, the Elder Board shall present a name of a qualified candidate to the congregation for approval to complete the unexpired term.

## **SECTION 3. STANDING COMMISSIONS AND MINISTRIES**

Commissions and ministries shall be established in accordance with the Bylaws to function according to the needs of the congregation. All voting members shall be selected from the membership of the church. The Elder Board can, at their discretion, appoint one elder in addition to the Lead Pastor to serve as an ex officio member of any commission or ministry in the church. Each commission or ministry shall report to the Elder Board regularly. All commissions and ministries shall report to the congregation at least once a year.

## **SECTION 4. CONGREGATIONAL BUSINESS MEETINGS**

- a. An annual congregational business meeting shall be held in July on a date set by the Elder Board. At that time annual reports shall be received and such other business transacted as may properly come before the meeting.
- b. There shall be no less than 2 regularly scheduled business meetings (including the annual business meeting) per year with reports by staff and ministry heads submitted to the congregation.
- d. All congregational business meetings shall be publicly announced in at least two regularly scheduled services prior to the meeting date.
- e. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor, the Moderator or the Elder Board. The Recording Secretary may also call a special meeting in response to a written request of ten members stating the purpose of the meeting.
- f. The presence of ten percent of the church's resident members, sixteen years of age and over, at any duly called congregational business meeting shall constitute the quorum required for the transaction of business.

- g. All votes at congregational business meetings shall require a simple majority for passage except where otherwise stated in this Constitution and its Bylaws.
- h. At the discretion of the Elder Board, absentee ballots will be made available at the church at least one week prior to all balloted elections.

## **ARTICLE VII - ORGANIZATIONS**

All organizations formed for spiritual purposes and using the church facilities must be approved by the Elder Board and shall function under their general supervision. Each organization shall keep a careful record of its proceedings and report at least once a year to the congregation.

## **ARTICLE VIII - DISSOLUTION**

In the event that this congregation should ever be dissolved, the assets of said corporation shall not be distributed to any member or group of members, but to some not-for-profit religious corporation affiliated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, as chosen by the congregation at the time of dissolution.

## **ARTICLE IX - AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution may be amended by a three-fourths vote of all members eligible to vote and present at a duly authorized business meeting providing that:

- a. such amendment has been reviewed by the Elder Board; and
- b. an announcement of the amendment has been made from the pulpit on two consecutive Sundays prior to the vote; and
- c. a written copy of the amendment has been provided or made available to all attending members each Sunday the above announcement is made.

## **ARTICLE X - AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO LEGAL CONTRACTS**

The following shall have authority to sign legal contracts on behalf of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa, which includes but is not limited to authority to borrow money, and to acquire, encumber and sell real and personal property of the church, as approved by the Elder Board, and as approved by a simple majority vote of all members eligible to vote and present at a duly authorized business meeting, if said meeting and authorization is required by the church Constitution and/or Bylaws:

1. Any two persons consisting of the Moderator of the Elder Board, the Chair of the Business Commission, or any other person specifically appointed to sign such contracts by the Elder Board and the Business Commission.

## **ARTICLE XI - CANCELLATION**

This Constitution was officially accepted and ratified by the congregation of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa on February 7, 2016.

This Constitution supersedes and cancels all other Constitutions and amendments, including the previous version of this Constitution which was approved on August 9, 2015.

### **AMENDMENT I**

#### **Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Grace Fellowship Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Grace Fellowship Church members and community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Grace Fellowship Church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking his mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed towards any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrine of Grace Fellowship Church.

The Amendment to the Constitution was officially accepted and ratified by the congregation of the Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa on February 7, 2016.

The amended Statement of Faith was officially accepted and ratified by the congregation of the Waterloo Grace Fellowship Church of Waterloo, Iowa on March 1, 2020.