



CHURCH CONSTITUTION

Grace Fellowship Sasolburg 2024

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ARTICLE 1

Name and Location

The name of this church shall be Grace Fellowship Sasolburg. The church is resident in Sasolburg, South Africa. For the rest of this document Grace Fellowship Sasolburg will be referred to as “this church” or “the church”.

ARTICLE 2

Purpose

This church is constituted for exclusively religious purposes. Its objectives include the preaching of the Gospel, ministering to its members and related activities. Recognizing the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible, this church is committed to the following commission as its purpose statement: “And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age’ (Matthew 28:18-20)

ARTICLE 3

Statement of Faith

The church subscribes to the teachings set out in its official publication entitled: “WHAT WE TEACH: Doctrinal Statement of Grace Fellowship Sasolburg”. This doctrinal statement for all purposes forms an integral part of this constitution as if it were repeated verbatim in this constitution.

ARTICLE 4

Legal Status

This church is a voluntary association with full legal personality, with perpetual succession and the power to hold property in its own name, distinct from its members and capable of being sued and suing in its own name.

ARTICLE 5

Membership

Section 1. Active Membership

Active membership in Grace Fellowship shall be open to all persons who make a credible confession of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord and who have been baptised some time subsequent to that personal confession of faith.

Section 2. Application for Membership

All requests for church membership must be made to a member of the Elders. The applicant must fill out an application form and read the doctrinal statement of the church. They must also attend the membership class prescribed by the Elders, after which one of the Elders shall meet with the applicant for a personal interview.

Section 3. Denial of Membership

If upon review of the person's application and a personal interview, the Elders determine that the applicant does not confess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Saviour, or that there is a lack of evidence of a godly lifestyle, membership shall be denied.

Section 4. Admission of Applicants

Applicants admitted to membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the Elders for the purpose of publicly affirming their membership commitment and for the public acknowledgement by the church of their membership.

Section 5. Responsibilities of Members

Members shall seek to grow in godliness and to exercise fully their spiritual gifts for the mutual benefit of the church body, and shall submit to the loving rule of the Elders (Hebrews 13: 17).

Section 6. Voting Privileges

Membership in this church shall entitle the member to vote at meetings of the members on those matters submitted to the church membership by the Elders. Voting in this case shall be carried out by secret ballot. Voting privileges are restricted to those members who have passed their eighteenth birthday.

Section 7. Discipline of Members

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6), to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

Members of this church and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture as determined by the Elders, shall be lovingly subjected to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18: 15-18. Before such dismissal, however (1) it shall be the duty of any member of this church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then (2) the warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two individuals who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of the Elders.

If the Elders determine—after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Timothy 5: 19, and Titus 3:10—that there is corroborating evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the Elders shall inform the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly- scheduled worship service in order that the church may call the erring individual to repentance. The erring individual shall be informed by registered mail that this public announcement will be made prior to the regularly scheduled worship service where the announcement is given.

If the erring individual demonstrates biblical repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the church in its collective call to repentance, then (4) he or she shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or -membership of the church and the congregation thereof at a regularly-scheduled worship service. The erring individual shall be informed of his or her public dismissal by registered mail prior to the actual announcement of dismissal. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the Elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership. The members of this church, and all other professing Christians who regularly attend or fellowship with this church, agree that there shall be no appeal to any court because of the dismissal or because of public statements to the congregation at the third or fourth stages of church discipline. Members who are under discipline by the church, as defined in the previous paragraph, forfeit and waive the right to resign from this church. Resignations from membership are possible only by members who are in good standing and who are not under any disciplinary action.

Section 8. Removal from Membership Roll

A member of this church who does not attend the services of this church for one year without plausible reason or excuse can be removed from the roll at the discretion of the Elders. Members in good standing who relocate to another church can request a letter of recommendation from the Elders.

Section 9. Regular meetings

A regular annual meeting of the church members shall be held within four months of the end of the financial year. At this regular annual meeting the members shall consider reports on the affairs of the church and any other business that the Elders bring before the meeting. At this meeting there shall also be an affirmation of the appointments made by the Elders of those who shall serve as Elders for the ensuing year.

Section 10. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the Elders.

Section 11. Notice of Meetings

Notice of regular meetings shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. Notice of the regular meeting shall be published in the church bulletin for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting. Notice of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven days prior to the meeting. It shall also be published in the church bulletin the Sunday before the meeting. The time and place of both regular and special meetings shall be determined by the Elders.

Section 12. Quorum

At all meetings of the members, whether regular or special, three members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

ARTICLE 6

Elders

Section 1. Powers

All the affairs of this church shall be exercised by or under the direction of the Elders who are responsible to teach and give oversight to the congregation. The Elders shall have the following powers in addition to any others granted in this Constitution:

(A) To select and remove all the officers, agents, pastors, and employees of the church in a manner consistent with the law; prescribe appropriate duties for them; and fix the terms of their office or appointment, and the amount of their compensation.

(B) To make disbursements from the funds and properties of the church as required to fulfil the purposes of the church as stated in this constitution.

(C) To conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the church, establishing such policies, practices, rules and regulations necessary for this purpose.

(D) To adopt and use a church seal and to alter the form of the seal as they choose.

(E) To assist the Pastor-Teacher in the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.

(F) The elders do not have the power to incur debt. If in extraordinary circumstances the elders believe that limited debt is necessary to fulfil the purposes of this church as set forth in this constitution, they shall call a special meeting of the members to detail the amount and purpose of the debt. Unanimous approval by the elders and a three-fourths majority vote of the members at this special meeting shall be necessary for the church to incur debt in any instance.

(G) To carry on a business and apply any such profit that results from the business activity in which it may legally engage for the purpose of the church as defined in Article Two.

Section 2. Number of Elders

The authorised number of Elders shall not be less than three or more than ten.

The Pastor Teacher shall be counted as one of the Elders.

Section 3. Nomination, Selection and Tenure of Office

Training: The elders shall teach once a year (or as otherwise deemed necessary) an Elders Training class for potential elders. To be eligible to be nominated as an elder, one must have successfully completed this class, including an oral examination by the elders over the church's doctrinal statement and practical ministry issues.

Nomination: Nominations for elders shall be requested from the church members once a year, five Sundays prior to the regular annual meeting. Only those who have successfully completed the Elders Training class (that year or in the past) are eligible for nomination.

Selection: The elders shall review the list of nominees and add or remove names based on each nominee's qualifications (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9), desire to serve (1 Timothy 3:1), and successful completion of the Elders Training class. The list of nominees approved by the elders shall be announced to the congregation and published in the church bulletin for three successive Sundays before the regular annual meeting. At the regular annual meeting the elder nominees shall be presented to the members for affirmation.

Tenure: The newly affirmed elders shall assume their office immediately. The term of office shall be one year, until the next regular annual meeting,

Section 4. Qualifications

Each Elder must be an active member of this church and must meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3: 1-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Section 5. Vacancies

Any Elder may resign effective upon giving a written notice to the Chairman of the Elders, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effectiveness of the resignation. If the resignation is to take effect at some future time, a successor may be selected and appointed before that time. This appointment shall follow the process outlined in Article 6, Section 3 of this Constitution (except that confirmation by the members shall take place at a duly called special meeting rather than the regular annual meeting). A vacancy in the Elders shall be considered to exist in case of the death, resignation, or removal of any elder, or if a need exists and the specified limit is not exceeded.

Section 6. Removal of Elders

Any Elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established in the minds of the remainder of the Elders.

Section 7. Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Elders shall be held on a regular basis as determined from time to time by the Elders. However, the Elders shall not meet less than ten times per year.

Section 8. Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Elders may be called at any time by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Elders or by a quorum of the members of the Elders. Special meetings can be held at any time if all the members of the Elders have been personally contacted and not less than two-thirds can attend.

Section 9. Quorum

A majority of the Elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum except as otherwise provided in this constitution. A majority of the Elders present at a meeting (whether a quorum or not) may adjourn any meeting. Whenever the matter to be considered concerns calling or dismissing a pastor, or buying or selling real estate, a quorum shall consist of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Elders.

Section 10. Action Without Meeting

Any action required or permitted by the Elders may be taken without a meeting if all members of the Elders consent in writing to a resolution to such action, provided that the resolution is subsequently minuted and signed by all members of the Elders at the first meeting of the Elders following the adoption of the resolution.

Section 11. Right of Inspection

Every Elder shall have the right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records and documents of this church. Elders also have the right to inspect the physical properties of this church.

Section 12. Decisions of the Elders

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous vote in a spirit of humility, each member regarding the others before himself.

Section 13. Fees and Compensation

Elders shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services. Elders serving this church in some capacity other than their duties as a member of the Elders can receive compensation from this church. Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from Grace Fellowship shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of that compensation.

Section 14. Deacons and Deaconesses

Duties: The Deacons and Deaconesses shall assist the Elders in the shepherding of the saints, aid in the general spiritual care of the church, assist in caring for those who are sick or needy, and perform other duties as assigned by the Elders.

Training: The elders shall teach once a year (or as otherwise deemed necessary) a training class for the training of potential deacons and deaconesses.

Nominations: Nominations for deacons and deaconesses shall be requested once a year five Sundays prior to the regular annual meeting from a list of those who have completed the training class.

Selection: The elders shall review the list of nominees and add or remove names based on each nominee's qualifications (I Timothy 3:8-13) and willingness to serve. The list of nominees approved by the elders shall be announced to the congregation and published in the church bulletin for three successive Sundays before the regular annual meeting. At the regular annual meeting the list of deacon nominees shall be submitted to the members for affirmation.

Tenure: The newly affirmed deacons and deaconesses shall assume their office immediately. The term of office shall be one year, until the next regular annual meeting.

Section 15. Other Councils and Committees

To promote efficient handling of church matters, the Elders may appoint various councils and committees from within its membership, the church staff and from the church at large. These councils and committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Elders. The general functions of councils and committees shall be:

- (A) To bring considered recommendations to the Elders on a designated issue.
- (B) To provide a wider base of counsel for Elders overseeing a specific ministry.

ARTICLE 7

Officers

Section 1. Officers

The officers of this church shall be a Chairman and a Vice- Chairman. This church may also have, at the discretion of the Elders, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

Section 2. Election

The officers shall be chosen annually by the Elders from the Elders own members. Each officer shall hold his office until he shall resign, be removed or become otherwise disqualified to serve, or until his successor shall be elected by the Elders.

Section 3. Removal and Resignation

Any officer may be removed, either with or without cause, by the remainder of the Elders at any time. Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Chairman or the Elders as a whole. Any such resignation shall take effect on the date of its reception or at any later time specified therein.

Section 4. Vacancies

A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the Elders from among their own members.

Section 5. Inability to Act

In the case of absence or inability to act of any officer, the Elders may delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any other officer or Elder the Elders select.

Section 6. The Chairman

The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the Elders. Those meetings shall be conducted according to scriptural principles such as those set forth in Philipians 2:2-8 and the principles of common law relating to the conducting of meetings. The Chairman shall be responsible to inform the appropriate authorities of any changes to this constitution.

Section 7. Vice-Chairman

In the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall perform all the duties of the Chairman.

Section 8. Minutes

The Secretary or any designated member of the Elders shall keep or cause to be kept a book of minutes. These minutes shall include the time and place of Elders meetings, the names of those present and the proceedings of the meeting.

Section 9. Financial Reports

The Treasurer or any designated member of the Elders shall keep or cause to be kept adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of this church. He will deposit all funds and valuables in the name of this church with such depositories as may be designated by the Elders. He shall disburse funds of this church as ordered or empowered by the Elders. He shall render to the Chairman or the Elders whenever they request it an account of all his transactions and of the financial condition of this church. He shall make financial reports at each regular Elders' meeting and at the annual meeting of the church members. The church financial records shall be audited each year by a professional auditor appointed by the Elders.

Section 10. Financial Policy

The church will operate its financial activities according to the document entitled "The Financial Policies of Grace Fellowship. " This policy is open to inspection by any person who so requests. The Financial Policies of Grace Fellowship document shall be reviewed annually by the Elders and amended if necessary.

ARTICLE 8

The Pastor-Teacher

Section 1. Election

The Pastor—Teacher shall be selected by the Elders and that selection shall be affirmed by the members of this church either at its annual meeting or a special meeting. He shall remain in office for an indefinite period of time, subject to the following reservations:

- (A) The Elders reserve the right to dismiss the Pastor-Teacher upon giving him one month's written notice of their intention to dismiss him.
- (B) The Pastor-Teacher must give one month's written notice if he intends to resign.
- (C) The Pastor-Teacher's resignation or dismissal is subject to a lesser time if both the Pastor Teacher and the Elders by mutual agreement provide otherwise.

Section 2. Duties

The Pastor-Teacher shall be responsible to the Elders. He shall be responsible for general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the church, especially through his studying and teaching ministry.

ARTICLE 9

Settlement of Disputes

In any dispute arising between church members, pastors, or staff pertaining to spiritual teaching or practices, church finances, or title to property purchased with church contributions, the dispute shall be resolved by the Elders. A decision shall be reached after prayerful consideration in a spirit of humility, with each Elder regarding the others before himself.

ARTICLE 10

Other Provisions

Section 1. Endorsement of Documents, Contracts

The Elders may authorise any officer or agent to enter into any contract in the name of and on behalf of the church. Unless so authorised by the Elders, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the church by any contract or agreement, or to pledge its credit, or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount. Subject to the provisions of applicable law, any note, mortgage, evidence of indebtedness, contract, conveyance, or other instrument in writing and any assignment or endorsement thereof executed or entered into between this church and any other person, when signed jointly by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman shall be valid and binding.

Section 2. Amendments

This constitution may be amended and new and additional sections or articles added by the Elders. If this constitution is amended, such an action must be both announced to the congregation and printed in the church bulletin for two successive Sundays.

Section 3. Record of Amendments

Whenever this constitution is amended or a new section or article is included, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original constitution. If any section or article is repealed, the fact of its repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in the book of minutes.

Section 4. Dissolution

In the event the dissolution of this church, the Elders shall cause the assets of the church to be distributed to another organisation with purposes similar to this church as defined in this constitution.

We, the undersigned, being the officers of Grace Fellowship Sasolburg hereby certify that the above constitution was adopted by the Elders and members of Grace Fellowship Sasolburg at Sasolburg on _____. This constitution is, as of the date of certification, the duly adopted and existing constitution of this church.

Chairman

Vice-Chairman