



basore road

GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH

KNOW | GROW | GATHER | GO

Basore Road Grace Brethren Church Constitution

Preamble

We, the members of the Basore Road Grace Brethren Church, desiring to most efficiently and effectively serve our Lord Jesus Christ, to foster the spirit of harmony and to promote good order in the church, in keeping with the instructions given by the Holy Spirit and recorded in the Word of God by Paul in First Corinthians 14:40, "Let all things be done decently and in order," do hereby adopt the following rules and procedures.

Article 1 - Name

The name of this church shall be Basore Road Grace Brethren Church.

Article 2- Statement of Faith

The "Statement of Faith" which this church shall embrace, preach, live and defend is set forth as follows:

The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches has a corporate commitment to a basic body of beliefs founded on God's revealed truth. The Statement of Faith is the expression of a never ending effort to clarify an understanding of the primary doctrines we accept.

It is the understanding of this Fellowship that, although individual Grace Brethren Churches remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, congregational church government relates alone to

the incidental affairs of the local congregation and not to doctrinal practices or tenets which must be general or universal the same in all congregations. The basic doctrines of one congregation shall be the same as the basic doctrines in every other.

Accordingly, the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc., 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, presents the following articles as a statement of those basic truths taught in the Bible which are common to our Christian faith and practice.

1. **The Bible.** The Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
2. **The One True God.** Existing eternally as three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; Matthew 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).
3. **The Lord Jesus Christ.** His preexistence and deity (John 1:1-3), incarnation by virgin birth (John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23), sinless life (Heb. 4:15), substitutionary death (2 Cor. 5:21), bodily resurrection (Luke 24:36-43), ascension into heaven, and present ministry (Heb. 4:14-16), and coming again (Acts 1:11).
4. **The Holy Spirit.** His personality (John 16:7-15), and deity (Acts 5:3-4), and His work in each believer: baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration (1 Cor. 12:13; Rom. 8:9), and filling (Eph. 5:18) to empower for Christian life and service (Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-23).
5. **Man.** His direct creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (John 3:3-5).
6. **Salvation.** A complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone, received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19).
7. **The Church.** One true church, the body and the bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32), composed of all true believers of the present age (1 Cor. 12:12-13); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for worldwide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Eph. 4:11-16).
8. **Christian Life.** A life of righteousness, good works and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (Rom. 12:1-2), manifested by speaking the truth (James 5:12), maintaining the sanctity of the home (Eph. 5:22-6:4), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (1 Cor. 6:1-8), not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (Rom. 12:17-21), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and maintaining a life of prayer (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6), including

the privilege, when sick, of calling for the elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:13-18).

9. **Ordinances.** The Christians should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ which are (1) baptism of believers by triune immersion (Matt. 28:19) and (2) the threefold communion service, consisting of the washing of the saints' feet (John 13:1-17), the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20-22, 33-34; Jude 12), and the communion of the bread and the cup (1 Cor. 11:23-26).
10. **Satan.** His existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (Rev. 12:1-10), his judgment (John 12:31), and final doom (Rev. 20:10).
11. **Second Coming.** The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth (1 Thess. 4:16-17) before the tribulation (1 Thess. 1:10; Rev. 3:10), and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Rev. 19:11-20:6).
12. **Future Life.** The conscious existence of the dead (Phil. 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgment and reward of believers (Rom. 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15).

We, the members of Basore Road Grace Brethren Church affirm the Continuing Resolutions of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches; a copy can be found in the church office.

Article 3 - Authority

1. The primary authority by which this church exists is received from the Holy Scriptures.
2. The secondary authority is by the laws of the State of Ohio under which it is incorporated.
3. The tertiary authority is by the common counsel and cooperation among Grace Brethren Churches.

Article 4 - Membership

Section A - Qualifications

1. A person must confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and be committed to Him as Savior and Lord.
2. The person must submit to the authority of the Bible as the complete, final, inerrant and inspired revelation of the Triune God to man.
3. A person must have been baptized as a believer, by immersion.
4. A person must understand the importance of being in submission to the leadership of the church, in the spirit of Hebrews 13:17, in order to promote the unity of the church in its mission.

5. A person must faithfully strive to honor Christ by living out the Christian life, by responding to the Holy Spirit, and by being obedient to the Bible.

Section B - Responsibilities

1. Commitment to regular attendance of worship services and other church events, including communion and congregational meetings as physically capable.
2. A willingness to serve and share in the work that needs to be done.
3. Contributing financially on a systematic basis to the local budget of the church.

Section C - Privileges

1. Members who are qualified, responsible (see sections A & B), and 18 years and older, are eligible to vote in all congregational meetings.
2. Any member who is dissatisfied with a general procedure of the operation of the church should share his or her concern with the Elder Board and/or pastoral/ teaching staff.

Section D - Withdrawal

1. A member may secure a transfer of membership to another church by requesting a letter of transfer.
2. A member's name may be dropped from the roll upon written request of the member involved.
3. A member's name may be dropped after (1) calendar year of nonattendance (health reasons will be taken into account).
4. A member's name may be dropped due to church discipline (see Section E. Discipline).

Section E - Discipline

Church discipline is clearly taught in Scripture. When situations are brought to leadership that fit the context of Matthew 18:15-17 or 1 Corinthians 5, appropriate steps will be taken. This could lead to a person being asked to leave the fellowship of the church community and removal from the list of formal church membership, until repentance is present.

Article 5 - Government

The membership of Basore Road Grace Brethren Church functions under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ and under the shepherding of a board of elders (which may include pastors on staff). Under this authority, the board of elders is empowered by the congregation as overseers and has the authority to act on all church affairs, subject to the terms of this Constitution.

Therefore the board of elders is accountable to the congregation.

Section A - Meeting

1. Annual Congregational Meeting – To be held within at least thirty days of the end of the calendar year to cover topics such as the approval of prospective elders and approval of the yearly budget.
2. Special Congregational Meetings – May be called by the pastor or the board of elders. A public announcement must be made on two Sunday morning services along with an

- agenda for said meeting, allowing at least 14 days before said meeting is to take place.
3. The Quorum -- Shall consist of the qualified members present at any properly announced congregational meeting.
 4. Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, all matters of business shall be approved by a majority vote of the members present at any properly called congregational meeting. In the event of an abstention vote, this abstention is not a yes or a no vote, and is subtracted from the total members present when it comes to calculating the majority.
 5. Voting -- The elders will seek congregational approval on the following:
 - a. New elders and reaffirmation of elders.
 - b. New senior pastor.
 - c. New deacons/deaconesses.
 - d. The yearly budget.
 - e. Any changes to the constitution.
 - f. The taking on of debt or acquisition or sale of any land/property.
 - g. Any non-budget expenditures over 5% of the total budget.

Section B - Pastors, Pastoral Staff and Officers of the Church

1. Senior Pastor
 - a. Qualifications
 - i. He shall meet the biblical qualifications of an elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9).
 - ii. He shall submit to and teach the Statement of Faith as set forth in Article 2 of the Constitution.
 - b. Responsibilities - In concert with the elders of the church, the senior pastor shall direct and oversee all church ministries, both spiritual and operational. He shall be an elder, an ex officio member of all Ministry Teams, and serve as the moderator of the Elder Board.
 - c. Selection / Call - When a vacancy shall occur in the senior pastor position, a Pastoral Search Team, approved by the Elder Board, shall screen prospective candidates. Once the candidate is approved by the Elder Board the candidate is presented to the congregation for approval. A two-thirds vote of the members present at a congregational meeting, called for that purpose, shall be necessary for final approval.
 - d. Term - The call for the senior pastor shall be an indefinite period subject to the discretion of the Elder Board.
 - e. Resignation or Removal - The senior pastor shall give a written three-months notice of resignation to the Elder Board. The Elder Board may also terminate the senior pastor at their discretion. Upon resignation or removal, the Elder Board shall make a determination regarding the nature and term of a severance package.
2. Pastoral Staff
 - a. Qualifications

- i. He shall meet the biblical qualifications of an elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9).
 - ii. He shall submit to and teach the Statement of Faith as set forth in Article 2 of the Constitution.
 - b. Responsibilities - Pastoral Staff are an extension of the senior pastor's ministry and are therefore under his authority as well as the authority of the Elder Board. They shall serve in the specific area of responsibility determined by the senior pastor. Pastoral staff can serve on the Elder Board, subject to congregational confirmation as an elder.
 - c. Selection / Call - When a vacancy or need presents itself on the pastoral staff, other than the senior pastor, the Elder Board will begin the process of filling that position. The Elder Board must approve the need of the position on the pastoral staff and must approve and hire the candidate to fill any position, subject to approved funds in the budget.
 - d. Term - The call for a pastor shall be an indefinite period subject to the discretion of the Elder Board.
 - e. Resignation or Removal - A pastor shall give a written three-months notice of resignation to the Elder Board. The Elder Board may also terminate the pastor at their discretion. Upon resignation or removal, the Elder board shall make a determination regarding the nature and term of a severance package.
3. Support Staff - The assessment of staffing needs and hiring of additional staff is determined by the Elder Board, subject to approved funds in the budget.
4. Elders
 - a. Qualifications
 - i. He shall meet the qualifications of an elder. (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, 1 Peter 5:1-3).
 - ii. He shall pass an examination process of the current board of elders.
 - b. Responsibilities - The Elder Board of the church shall humbly provide oversight for all matters of the church, including doctrine and teaching, policy-making, finances, administration, property management, and goal setting (Acts 20:17, 28, 1 Tim. 5:17, Hebrews 13:17), and the Elder Board shall lovingly lead as examples and shepherds (1 Peter 5:1-3). The elders shall seek the congregational approval on:
 - i. New elders and reaffirmation of elders.
 - ii. New senior pastor.
 - iii. New deacons/deaconesses.
 - iv. The approval of a yearly budget.
 - v. Any changes to the Constitution.
 - vi. The taking on of debt or acquisition or sale of land/property.
 - vii. Any non-budget expenditures over 5% of the total budget.
 - c. Call - Recommendations for eldership shall be submitted to the Elder Board for

review. Those elder candidates will be presented to the congregation, allowing time for prayerful consideration. After Elder Board training/testing/vetting, approved candidates will be presented to the congregation for a vote of affirmation at a properly called congregational meeting. The candidate must receive unanimous congregational affirmation from the voting quorum. It is the Elder Board's desire to always receive unanimous congregational affirmation, as any biblical reason to vote "no" should be brought to the candidate first (to allow them to withdraw if valid) and then before the Elder Board during the review/vetting process. For a disapproval vote to be counted, a valid biblical reason must be written on the ballot and it must be signed. All ballots without a biblical reason for a disapproval vote and/or without a signature, will not be counted and the ballot will be discarded. All valid "No" votes will be addressed by the current elder board.

- d. Term - An elder will serve for at least three years and may be granted leave or retirement by approval of the Elder Board. Every three years an elder will be subject to reaffirmation by the church membership.
 - e. Resignation or Removal - An elder shall give a written three-months notice of resignation to the Elder Board. The Elder Board may also terminate an offending elder at their own discretion or if the tri-annual reaffirmation fails.
 - f. An elder is not permitted to vote on issues relating directly to himself, to avoid a conflict of interest.
5. Deacons and Deaconesses
- a. Responsibilities - Deacons/deaconesses shall serve the Lord by assisting the elders primarily by meeting the physical needs of those within the church family. There will be a chairman of the deacons, appointed by the Elder Board, who will report to the elders as needed.
 - b. Call - Deacons/deaconesses shall be chosen from the membership of the church according to the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Recommendations for this office shall be submitted for approval to the Elder Board, which will then present approved candidates to the church for a vote of affirmation.
 - c. Term - Deacon/deaconesses shall serve a term mutually agreed upon by the Elder Board and the deacons/deaconesses.
 - d. Resignation or Removal - A deacon/deaconess shall give a reasonable notice of resignation to the Elder Board. Involuntary termination by the Elder Board can also occur at the discretion of the Elder Board.
6. Ministry Teams - Ministry Teams shall be formed and dissolved upon the discretion of the Elder Board (Examples of Ministry Teams could include Sunday School Ministry team, Music Ministry team, Missions Ministry team, and so on). They shall serve under the oversight of the Elder Board.

Article 6 - Property of the Church

Section A - Title

The title to the property of the church shall be vested in the church, with officers of the Elder Board serving as corporate trustees of the same.

Section B - Oversight

The Elder Board shall have oversight of all the church properties, and shall have the responsibility of using them for the work of the Lord. The Elder Board shall have no power to buy, sell, lease, mortgage, or transfer any real property, except by the two-thirds vote of the church members present at a regular or specially called congregational meeting previously announced for such purposes.

Section C - Debts

The Elder Board shall not authorize a debt or aggregation of debts, except by the majority vote of the church members present at a regular or specially called congregational meeting previously announced for such purposes.

Section D - Non-budgeted Expenses

Non-budgeted expenses not to exceed an aggregate of 5% of the budget in the course of a budget year may be approved by the Elder Board out of available funds at any regular or specially called Elder meeting. Non-budgeted expenses greater than 5% of the budget must be approved by a majority vote of the church members present at a regular or specially called congregational meeting previously announced for such purposes.

Section E - Contracts

The Elder Board shall have the power to enter into all contracts on behalf of the church. Financial contracts must use approved funds from the appropriate budgetary line item.

Article 7 - Amendments

1. This constitution can be amended by a two-thirds vote of all members eligible to vote at a properly called congregational meeting.
2. All Constitutional changes shall be made available to the congregation in writing, at least 14 days prior to the congregational meeting where they will be voted upon.

Article 8 - Dissolution of the Church

Any action to dissolve the church must be approved by a two-thirds vote of members present at a properly called congregational meeting. All real property, finances, and assets shall be disbursed to The Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, ministries thereof or another 501(c)(3) organization at the discretion of the Elder Board of the Basore Road Grace Brethren Church.