

**Bylaws**  
**GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH**  
**OF COLUMBUS, OHIO**

**ARTICLE I**

**Name**

The legal name of this church shall be the GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH OF COLUMBUS, OHIO (DBA Grace Polaris Church) and is incorporated as a nonprofit corporation organized for the purpose of maintaining a church to meet the spiritual needs of the community. For the purpose of this document, the name Grace Polaris Church will be used.

**ARTICLE II**

**Objectives**

The objectives of Grace Polaris Church are:

Exaltation of God - The worship, praise, and glorification of God through prayer, teaching, music, living, and proper stewardship of the resources entrusted to the church (Matt. 4:10; I Cor. 10:31; Eph. 5:18; Heb. 13:15).

Edification of the Believer - The process of bringing believers to spiritual maturity through the Word of God and the ministry of the Body of Christ (Rom. 14:19; Eph. 4:11-16, 29; II Tim. 3:16,17).

Evangelization of the Non-Believer - Sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with non-believers in order that they will believe in Jesus, obey Him in baptism, and minister as a member in a biblical local church (Matt. 28:19,20; Acts 1:8; Rom. 10:9,10,13-15).

## **ARTICLE III**

### **Principles**

The Statement of Faith does not exhaust the extent of our faith. The Bible itself is the sole and final source of all that we believe. We do believe, however, that the following Statement of Faith accurately represents the teaching of the Bible, and therefore, is binding upon all members.

### **Statement of Faith**

We of Grace Polaris Church in harmony with our historic position, believing the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible to be our infallible rule of faith and of practice, and feeling our 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.

Section 1. The Bible. The Word of God, the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given by God (II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21).

Section 2. The One True God. Existing eternally as three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; Matt. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14).

Section 3. The Lord Jesus Christ. His preexistence and deity (John 1:1-3); incarnation by virgin birth (John 1:14; Matt. 1:18-23); sinless life (Heb. 4:15); substitutionary death (II 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).

Section 4. The Holy Spirit. His personality (John 16:7-15) and deity (Acts 5:3-4); His work in each believer, baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration (I 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).

Section 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).

Section 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; I Peter 1:18,19).

Section 7. The Church. One true Church, the Body and Bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32), composed of all true believers of the present age (I Cor. 12:12-13), and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide Gospel witness. Each local church is autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Eph. 4:11-16).

Section 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 (I 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).

Section 9. Ordinances. The Christian 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 (I Cor. 11:20-22, 33,34; Jude 12); and the communion of the bread and the cup (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Section 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).

Section 11. Second Coming. The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His Church from the earth (I Thess. 4:16,17) before the tribulation (I 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).

Section 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; II 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).

#### **ARTICLE IV**

##### **Membership**

**Members will be received into Grace Polaris Church according to Governing Policies.**

#### **ARTICLE V**

##### **Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor is to lead the staff, congregation, and elders in carrying out the mission and vision of the church by making decisions and setting strategies within the parameters (policies) set by the Elder Executive Council.

The Lead Pastor is the Elder Executive Council's official link to the church and is accountable for organizational performance.

#### **ARTICLE VI**

##### **The College of Elders**

The College of Elders shall consist of godly men who have been selected to serve the Grace Polaris Church community of believers in the role of elder. Each elder shall meet the qualifications set forth in the **Governing Policies**.

The College of Elders shall provide spiritual discernment in matters of church doctrine. They shall lovingly lead as examples and shepherds. They shall provide counsel and discipline to church members as needed. They shall serve the church by being men of prayer, teaching biblical truth,

shepherding the flock, performing anointing services, counseling, leading in baptisms and communion services, arbitrating in areas of conflict, and overseeing discipline and reconciliation.

The College of Elders gives full authority to the Elder Executive Council to be the governing body of the church. The College of Elders shall choose the lay elders who sit on the Elder Executive Council. See Governing Policies concerning selection criteria.

1. Elder Terms

Life, Perpetual with annual recommitment and reaffirmation.

2. Meetings

At any meeting of the College of Elders, a majority of the elders shall constitute a quorum. Meetings of the College of Elders may also include other Directors or staff members at the discretion of the Lead Pastor and the Moderator.

3. Organizational Structure

- a. Moderator - At the May meeting, the College of Elders shall elect a Moderator for a one-year term who will fulfill the responsibilities as defined in the Governing Policies.
- b. Vice Moderator - At the May meeting, the College of Elders shall elect a Vice Moderator for a one-year term who will fulfill the responsibilities as defined in the Governing Policies.

**ARTICLE VII**  
**Elder Executive Council**

The governing Board of Grace Polaris Church shall be known as the Elder Executive Council.

The Elder Executive Council shall oversee the governance of the church by creating parameters (policies) for the Lead Pastor's behavior and decision making that express the mind of the Council. The Elder Executive Council shall be chaired by the Moderator of the College of Elders and may seek input from the College of Elders.

The Elder Executive Council shall direct and inspire the church through careful establishment of broad written

policies reflecting the Council's values and perspectives. The Council's major policy focus will be on the intended long-term impacts of the church's mission, not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those effects.

The Elder Executive Council, through the Moderator, may establish committees that serve the Elder Executive Council for such duties and tenure as they determine. Membership on committees shall not necessarily be limited to members of the Elder Executive Council.

The Elder Executive Council shall also have responsibilities as defined in the Governing Policies.

## **ARTICLE VIII**

### **The College of Deacons**

Section 1. Membership. The College of Deacons shall consist of godly men who have been selected to serve the community of believers in the role of deacon. Deacons shall meet the qualifications and be willing to fulfill the responsibilities defined in the Governing Policies.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Meetings**

Section 1. Church Services - The Lead Pastor, with his staff, shall develop a weekly schedule and Sunday school classes, as well as other meetings during the week.

Section 2. Voting - All members who are eighteen (18) years of age or older are eligible to vote in all business meetings or regularly scheduled Sunday church services.

Section 3. Annual Meeting - An Annual Meeting of the congregation will be held in the first fiscal quarter each year.

Section 4. Annual Budget- At a business meeting a budget for the following fiscal year shall be presented to the congregation for approval. The affirmative vote of two-

thirds (2/3) of the eligible members present and voting shall be required to approve the budget. The fiscal year shall commence July 1 and end June 30.

Section 5. Special Meetings - Special congregational meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor, the Moderator, or by a written petition of signatures of at least fifty (50) members specifying the object of such a meeting. Notice of said meetings shall be given in the church's bulletin at least two (2) successive Sundays in advance of the meeting.

Section 6. Quorum - At any business meeting two hundred (200) members eighteen (18) years of age or older shall constitute a quorum. No member shall be permitted to vote by proxy or by absentee ballot.

Section 7. Notice - A summary of any matter to be presented to the congregation at any business meeting shall be published in the church's bulletin on two (2) successive Sundays in advance of the meeting.

Section 8. Organization - At each congregational business meeting, the Moderator, or in his absence the Vice Moderator, shall act as chairman. "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be the guide in all situations not covered in these Bylaws. These Bylaws shall supersede "Robert's Rules of Order" if there is a conflicting opinion.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Property**

Section 1. Title. Title to all real and personal property shall be in the name of the church. All purchases or sale of land or buildings must be approved by a majority vote of the members of the College of Elders.

Section 2. Use. All church property shall be dedicated and used for evangelism of the lost, Christian education, Christian fellowship, and Christian service. All meetings, gatherings, events, and activities conducted in the facilities of the church shall be consistent with the objectives of this church and in harmony with the Statement of Faith (I Cor. 10:31, 14:40).

Section 3. Sale. Consistent with the government requirements, upon the liquidation, dissolution, or abandonment of this church, the property, facilities, and funds will not inure to the benefit of any private individual but rather the proceeds of dissolution should be given to an organization (or organizations) that is a 501(c)(3) corporation affiliated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

## **ARTICLE XI**

### **Amendments**

These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote by written ballot of all eligible members present and voting at any regularly scheduled Sunday church service or at a special meeting called for that purpose. An announcement of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be placed in the church bulletin two (2) successive Sundays in advance of the day the vote is to be taken.



# **Grace Polaris Church**

## **Governing Policies**

Effective June 30, 2012

Last Modified September 30, 2019

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## **1.0 Authority**

### **1.1 Jesus Christ**

The head of the church is the Lord Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 1:22; 5:23).

### **1.2 God's Word**

The Bible, God's written inspired Word, is the expressed will of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

### **1.3 Governance**

All final authority shall be vested in the members, and the church shall not be subject to any other body.

### **1.4 Elders**

The men of God chosen by the Holy Spirit and the members of the church to serve, shepherd, and guide the church according to the will of the Lord as given in His Word (Acts 20:17,28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2,3).

### **1.5 Deacons & Deaconesses**

The men and women of God chosen by the Holy Spirit and the members of the church to serve and direct service in the church under the shepherding of the elders (1 Timothy 3:8-13).

### **1.6 Association**

This church is a sovereign local church and is not subordinate to any other ecclesiastical body. This church is voluntarily associated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches and thereby recognizes the privileges and responsibilities of mutual doctrinal accountability, as well as close fellowship, encouragement, and cooperation in fulfilling the Great Commission (John 17:11-13; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Acts 15:1-16:5; 2 Corinthians 8:19; 3 John 8; Matthew 28:19,20).

### **1.7 Government**

This church is incorporated under the laws of the State of Ohio (Romans 13:1-7). The commands in God's Word supersede all human government (Acts 5:29).

### **1.8 Human Sexuality**

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,

bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery, or pornography is a sinful perversion of God's gift of sex (Genesis 2:24; 19:5-7; 26:8,9; Leviticus 18:1-30; Romans 1:26-29; 1 Corinthians 5:1; 6:9,10; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; Hebrews 13:4).

We believe that the only legitimate marriage is the joining of one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:2-9; Ephesians 5:31-33).

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions for men and women in the home and the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home, and men are to be the spiritual leaders (pastors and elders) of the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible for licensure and ordination by the church (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:21-28; 1 Timothy 2:8-15; 3:4,5, 12).

### **1.9 Abortion**

We believe that human life begins at conception and that the unborn child is a living human being. Abortion constitutes the unjustified, unexcused taking of unborn human life. Abortion is murder. We reject any teaching that abortions of pregnancies due to rape, incest, birth defects, gender selection, birth or population control, or the mental wellbeing of the mother are acceptable (Job 3:16; Psalms 51:5; 139:13-18; Isaiah 44:24; 49:1, 5; Jeremiah 1:5; 20:14-18; Luke 1:44).

## **2.0 Congregation & Membership**

Any person who has confessed that Jesus Christ is God the Son and has accepted Him as his personal Savior and Lord (Romans 10:9,10); who believes the Bible is the complete (2 Timothy 3:16), final, and inspired revelation of the triune God to man; who has been baptized subsequent to salvation (Matthew 28:19); who has consented to the objectives and provisions of the Bylaws of this church; and who has completed the "Considering Church Membership" class may become a member of this church.

### **2.1 Membership Privileges & Responsibilities**

A. Members at Grace Affirm:

#### **1. Salvation:**

I have trusted in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness

of my sin, have received new life and the gift of His Spirit, and have the confident assurance of eternal life. As a result of this repentance and faith, I am born-again and am a follower of Jesus.

2. Believer's Baptism:

I have been baptized subsequent to my salvation, either at Grace or with another church which has affirmed that to Grace in writing. I recognize that baptism does not save me but declares publicly my allegiance and obedience to Jesus.

3. Church Relationships:

If I have previous involvement in another local church, I have dealt with all known issues and conflicts to the best of my knowledge and have informed them of my intent to make Grace my local church belonging and identity. I recognize that carrying disunity or conflict to a new church harms me and all involved.

B. Members at Grace Expect:

1. Growth:

I will be considered a part of the Grace family and the recipient of efforts which are intentionally committed to my growth in holy living and maturity as a follower of Jesus.

2. Belonging:

I will be made aware of ways in which I can meaningfully connect in relational settings and be linked with people who can walk together, in understanding of my stage or place in life, after Jesus.

3. Training:

I will be helped to find a place or places of ministry and also helped to identify what my spiritual gift or gifts are, so that I can serve others most fruitfully.

4. Care:

I will be prayed for and cared for in times of need and crisis as I make others aware of the burdens I carry and circumstances I face, including those of my family.

5. Witness:

I will be assisted in learning how to actively live and verbally share my faith in Jesus Christ, knowing that the Gospel is the ultimate good news and vital for others to understand and embrace.

### C. Members at Grace Commit:

#### 1. Participation:

I will be a regular presence at gatherings of Grace Polaris Church, including worship services, a relational or small group, communion celebrations, member meetings, and special outreach opportunities.

#### 2. Contribution:

I will be a regular contributor in a specified area or ministry role, especially in areas of interest or gifting, realizing that neither God is honored nor a local church well-served by spiritual spectators.

#### 3. Giving:

I am committed to giving of my time, talent, and financial resources, and will do so regularly as the Lord prospers me (1 Corinthians 16:2), with generosity (1 Timothy 6:17-19) and sacrifice (Mark 12:41-44), not out of compulsion but with a heart of cheerfulness (2 Corinthians 9:6,7) and where I see need (1 John 3:17). I will also not use the withholding of my giving as a hidden way to register my discontent or frustration with something or someone connected to the church.

#### 4. Teachable:

I will be open to correction and will pursue unity with other believers even as tensions arise, knowing that this pleases Jesus and reflects powerfully to others. I will not be a conscious source of bitterness and division among God's people.

#### 5. Input:

I will be ready to share my thoughts, hopes, and concerns with leaders in the church, knowing that they must give an account to God for their decisions and influence, which may not always involve following my desires.

#### 6. Prayer:

I will pray regularly for the leadership and ministries of our church.

### **2.2 Withdrawal**

Written request by a member for withdrawal of membership from the church, for any reason, shall be granted by the Elder Executive Council after proper review.

## 2.3 Removal

Every attempt is made to keep the church membership roster current, reflecting those individuals who consider Grace Polaris Church their church home.

### A. Non-Functioning Members:

The Elder Executive Council, or elder committee appointed by the Elder Executive Council, may remove a member from the membership roster at any time when they reasonably believe that the member is no longer functioning as a member of Grace Polaris Church (2.1.C).

When a member fails to participate in the church by having no record of attendance or contribution for one full year (sickness, age, military service, and missions work excluded), the Elder Executive Council, or elder committee appointed by the Elder Executive Council, may remove the member from the membership roster.

### B. Departure from the Faith:

#### 1. Member:

When a member departs from the faith, by advocating divisive teachings or those contrary to the Bible as defined in the Statement of Faith, or engages in continuous unrepentant sin, damaging the testimony of the church, then such a member may be removed from membership of the church by a two-thirds vote of the College of Elders.

Prior to removal of membership, the elders shall attempt to restore the wayward member using as a pattern the steps set forth in Matthew 18:15-17, the College of Elders representing the church in this process. If personal counsel and counsel with two (2) or three (3) witnesses is unsuccessful, then a two-thirds (2/3) vote by written ballot of the College of Elders shall be necessary for removal (Matthew 18:15-17; Hebrews 10:25; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; Titus 3:10,11; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; 2 John 10,11; Galatians 6:1). The action taken by the College of Elders may be conveyed to the congregation.

#### 2. Non-Member:

If a non-member attender departs from the faith by



advocating divisive teachings or those contrary to the Bible as defined in the Statement of Faith or engages in continuous unrepentant sin, damaging the testimony of the church, then such non-member may be directed to cease attending Grace Polaris Church.

Prior to this action the elders shall attempt to restore the wayward attender (2 Timothy 2:24-26; Galatians 6:1) in accordance with the steps set forth in Matthew 18:15-17. If personal counsel and counsel with two (2) or three (3) witnesses is unsuccessful, then a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the College of Elders shall be required to prohibit the wayward individual from continuing to attend Grace Polaris Church.

### **3.0 The College of Elders**

The College of Elders shall consist of godly men who have been selected to serve the Grace Polaris Church community of believers in the role of elder. Each elder shall meet the qualifications defined in Internal Structure Policy 3.7.

#### **3.1 Job Description**

The College of Elders shall:

- A. Provide spiritual discernment in matters of church doctrine.
- B. Lovingly lead as examples and shepherd.
- C. Provide counsel and discipline to church members as needed.
- D. Serve the church by being men of prayer, teaching biblical truth, shepherding the flock, performing anointing services, counseling, leading in baptisms and communion services, arbitrating in areas of conflict, and overseeing discipline and reconciliation.

#### **3.2 Governing Body**

The College of Elders gives full authority to the Elder Executive Council (as defined in Internal Structure Policy 4.0) to be the governing body of the church. Therefore:

- A. Selection of the lay elders who sit on the Elder Executive Council is the responsibility of The College of Elders.

- B. Exercise of authority over Lead Pastor rests solely with the Elder Executive Council. (Staff members work under the guidance, direction, and authority of the Lead Pastor, rather than the College of Elders or the Elder Executive Council).
- C. Elders will respect the confidentiality appropriate to issues of a sensitive nature.
- D. Elders will be properly prepared for board deliberation.
- E. Elders will support the legitimacy and authority of the final determination of the board on any matter, without regard to personal position on the issue.

### **3.3 Committees of the College of Elders**

The College of Elders may form committees to help carry out the College of Elders' responsibilities. The committees do not exercise authority over the Elder Executive Council, Lead Pastor, or staff. The committees will help the College of Elders carry out their ministry. Examples of College of Elders' committees:

#### **A. Discipline & Reconciliation:**

The College of Elders shall be responsible for matters relating to discipline and reconciliation of any member, deacon, elder, or other person in a leadership position.

1. The purpose of all church discipline is to enable the sinning member to be restored to the fullest extent possible to fellowship with and to minister to the congregation (Galatians 6:1).
2. Restoration is to be accomplished through the oversight of a committee of the elders established for that purpose by the Moderator and known as the Restoration Committee.
3. It shall be the duty of the Restoration Committee to establish the restoration process on a case-by-case basis and to present that process to the Moderator, who in turn shall report to the College of Elders.
4. It shall further be the duty of the Restoration Committee to oversee the progress of the member at each stage of the restoration process and to report that progress to the Moderator.
5. The restoration process shall be of indeterminate length depending upon the nature of the sin, the ministry

- performed by the member, and the response of the member to the restoration process.
6. The Moderator shall report to the College of Elders the progress of the member at each stage of the restoration process.
  7. Full restoration shall be accomplished upon recommendation of the Moderator and the Restoration Committee.
  8. Any elder objecting to the progress or full restoration shall meet with one or more members of the Restoration Committee or the Moderator to discuss such objection.
  9. This restoration process shall apply to elders, provided, however, that if an elder is removed from the office of elder, he cannot be restored to that office unless selected in accordance with Governing Internal Structure Policy 3.10, 3.11, and 3.12.
- B. College of Elder Development
  - C. Baptism & Membership
  - D. Arbitration
  - E. New Elder Development & Training
  - F. Anointing

### **3.4 Executive Elder Council & College of Elders Governance**

All responsibility for governance shall be vested in the Elder Executive Council except in the following circumstances, which would necessitate the majority approval of all members of the College of Elders:

- A. Major theological issues.
- B. Hiring new Lead Pastor, in accordance with Internal Structure Policy 5.4.
- C. Termination of Lead Pastor (Lay Elder vote), in accordance with Internal Structure Policy 5.6.
- D. Change of Grace Polaris Church's affiliation with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.
- E. Selling or purchasing of property.
- F. Any major construction project.
- G. Selection of Moderator and Vice Moderator (Lay Elder vote).
- H. Selection of Lay Elders to Elder Executive Council (Lay Elder vote).
- I. Removal from church membership, in accordance with Internal Structure Policy 2.3.

- J. Removal of an elder, as in Internal Structure Policy 3.14.
- K. Any change to Section 3.4 of the Governing Policies Internal Structure or any change regarding the powers and responsibilities of the Elder Executive Council. Such changes must be approved by the College of Elders with a 2/3 written vote.

### **3.5 Elder Terms**

- A. Once a man becomes an elder, he becomes a member of the College of Elders and is a perpetual elder.
- B. He will be required to sign an Elder Annual Affirmation.
- C. He may resign or be removed from office in accordance with Internal Structure Policy 3.14.
- D. An Elder's term shall commence the day he is approved by the congregation.

### **3.6 Meetings**

The College of Elders will meet at least quarterly.

### **3.7 Elder Qualifications**

Each elder shall meet the biblical qualification of an elder. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3).

- A. He shall be a member of the church for at least five years.
- B. He shall have served in a leadership position, in order that his character may be observed.
- C. Under certain circumstances, the five-year church membership requirement may be waived by the College of Elders.
- D. He shall submit to and pass an examination given by a committee composed of elders, appointed by the Moderator, to review any questions or any matters pertaining to his qualifications.
- E. Staff Pastors may meet the qualifications for eldership through District licensure or ordination, or local licensure following the above procedures and approval of the College of Elders.

### **3.8 In-Service Elder Qualifications**

- A. Elders who have met the qualifications of Internal Structure Policy 3.7 and are in fulltime Christian service

are eligible for in-service eldership in our body of believers.

- B. They must choose Grace Polaris Church as the body of believers to whom they will be held accountable.
- C. They are encouraged to attend elder meetings when they are in the Columbus vicinity.
- D. They will not have a vote at those meetings.

### **3.9 Inactive Elder Status**

Appointed elders actively serve by shepherding God's flock here at Grace Polaris Church and commit to conduct themselves according the biblical principles outlined in our Elder Annual Affirmation form. There may be times when an elder is not able to fulfill their elder responsibilities due to a change in life circumstances. An Inactive Elder Status may be appropriate for these circumstances.

#### **A. Reasons for Being Placed on the Inactive Elder Status:**

The Inactive Elder Status is for elders who are not able to fulfill their elder duties or responsibilities for a significant period of time (six months or more). This status is not for short term issues (less than six months). Possible reasons for being placed on the Inactive Elder Status may include, but are not limited to:

1. An elder may request to be placed on the Inactive Elder Status.
2. A long-term absence from Grace Polaris Church (six months or more) due to traveling or personal circumstances.
3. A long-term illness (six months or more) that does not allow the elder to participate at Grace Polaris Church.
4. An elder is not willing to sign the Elder Annual Affirmation form after multiple request have been attempted.

The Inactive Elder Status would not be appropriate to use as a disciplinary tool for elders who are not conducting themselves according to the biblical principles outlined in our Elder Annual Affirmation form. In this case, that elder should voluntarily remove themselves from an elder designation with Grace Polaris Church. Otherwise, the College of Elders will be obliged to remove that individual from elder designation and

service. This is the least preferable outcome for the sake of the elder, the College of Elders, and Grace Polaris Church.

B. Process for being placed on the Inactive Elder Status:

An elder will be placed on the Inactive Elder Status if one of the following two things occur:

1. The elder request to be placed on the Inactive Elder Status.
2. A two-thirds vote by the College of Elders to place the elder on the Inactive Elder Status based on the above reasons.

C. Result of Inactive Elder Status:

1. The Elder will be removed the active elder roster.
2. The Elder will not have any elder duties or responsibilities.
3. The Elder will not receive emails or other elder communications.
4. The Elder will not receive invitations to elder meetings.
5. The Elder will not have a vote in any elder business.

D. Reinstatement to an Active Elder:

Two things must occur for an elder to be reinstated to an active elder:

1. The elder must request and be willing to return to an active elder.
2. An approval by the College of Elders by a 2/3 vote.

The approval for reinstatement by the College of Elders should only occur if the reason for being placed on the Inactive Elder Status has been resolved and the elder is now able and willing to fulfill their elder duties and responsibilities.

### **3.10 Selection**

- A. The congregation may suggest to the elders that certain members be considered for the office of elder. The elders shall review the members so recommended and, if appropriate, contact the member to determine his interest in becoming an elder.
- B. If such a member believes that the Holy Spirit is calling him to the office of eldership (1 Timothy 3:1), he shall submit an application to the elders.

- C. The College of Elders will oversee his examination. If he qualifies, they will recommend him to the congregation for approval.

### **3.11 Congregational Vote**

- A. Any member casting a negative vote for a candidate for elder shall, within two (2) days following the election, make an appointment with a member of the College of Elders to discuss the reason for his vote.
- B. Failure of the member to make such an appointment shall constitute withdrawal of the negative vote.
- C. Should the reason for the negative vote indicate failure of the candidate to satisfy the qualifications for elder, a committee composed of elders, appointed by the Moderator, shall investigate the complaint (1 Timothy 5:19,20).
- D. If the complaint is determined to be valid, the candidate shall be asked to withdraw his application for eldership and shall not be eligible for eldership.
- E. The candidate may reapply if the circumstances preventing his approval have changed.

### **3.12 Credentials of Licensure & Ordination**

The College of Elders shall evaluate the request from any elder that expresses a desire to sit for examination for licensure or ordination recognition in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

- A. After examination, a motion should state that the College of Elders believes him to be sound in the faith, having qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9. In sending our brother to the Examining Board, we believe his character and life is consistent with the Gospel ministry, his spiritual maturity is evident in our local church, and we believe he is personally fit for the work of the ministry. Thus, we recommend his examination for licensure or ordination in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches to the Gospel ministry. The vote shall be by secret ballot.
- B. Upon request of that recommendation, The North Central Ohio District Examining Board will follow its established procedure for examination for licensures or ordination.

- C. When the examining procedure is completed, the Examining Board shall send its recommendation to the College of Elders. The College of Elders shall study the Examining Board's recommendation and then vote whether to send their recommendation for licensure or ordination to the congregation for approval.

### **3.13 Organizational Structure of College of Elders**

A. Moderator:

At the spring meeting, the College of Elders shall elect a Moderator for a one-year term who will fulfill the responsibilities as defined in Governing Policies 3.0.

The responsibility of the Moderator is to ensure the College of Elders and Elder Executive Council behave consistently with their own rules and coordinates and directs the work of the College of Elders and the Elder Executive Council.

1. At each meeting of the College of Elders and the Elder Executive Council, the Moderator, or in his absence, the Vice Moderator, shall act as chairman.
2. The Moderator shall not serve more than two consecutive one-year terms.
3. The Moderator has no authority to supervise or direct the Lead Pastor.
4. The Moderator may represent the Elder Executive Council to outside parties in announcing Elder Executive Council stated positions.
5. The Moderator may delegate this authority but remains accountable for its use.
6. The Moderator will serve in an ex officio capacity on all Committees of the Elder Executive Council.
7. The Moderator shall have authority to decide whether or not to permit one or more board members to be counted toward a quorum by participating in a given board meeting by means of communication equipment. In exercising this discretion, the Moderator shall take into account the board's general desire that board members attend board meetings in person unless there are unusual circumstances.



8. Agenda and meeting discussion content will be only those issues, which, according to Elder Executive Council policy, clearly belong to the Elder Executive Council to decide.

9. The Moderator's term will commence on July 1 following his election.

B. Vice Moderator:

At the spring meeting, the College of Elders shall elect a Vice Moderator for a one-year term.

1. The Vice Moderator shall not serve more than two consecutive one-year terms.

2. In the absence of the Moderator, the Vice Moderator shall assume the duties and responsibilities of Moderator.

3. If the office of Moderator is vacated for any reason, the Vice Moderator shall fill the unexpired term.

4. The Vice Moderator's term will commence on July 1 following his election.

### **3.14 Removal or Resignation**

An elder, deacon, or any other person in an elected leadership position may be removed from his office for:

A. Conduct unbecoming a person in the position of church leadership (1 Timothy 5:19-22; Galatians 6:1-3; 1 Corinthians 6:4,5).

B. Practices contrary to the Word of God.

C. Service which is unsatisfactory to the church.

D. Prior to removal, the College of Elders shall attempt to restore the wayward elder, deacon, advisory team member, or other church leader in accordance with the steps set forth in Matthew 18:15-17

1. "If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother" (18:15).

2. "But if he won't listen, take one or two more with you, so that by the testimony of two or three witnesses every fact may be established" (18:16).

3. "If he pays no attention to them, tell the church. But if he doesn't pay attention even to the church, let him be like an unbeliever and a tax collector to you" (18:17).

4. The College of Elders shall assume the role of the church as directed in Matthew 18:17.

5. The accused brother and the members of the College of Elders shall be given at least two weeks' notice of the time and place where a hearing will take place. The accused brother will be given an opportunity to present his defense. At the conclusion of discussion, a motion to remove the brother from his position of elder shall be voted on, requiring a 2/3 written ballot for dismissal.
- E. An elder may resign by submitting a written letter of resignation to the College of Elders through the moderator.

## **4.0 Elder Executive Council**

The governing Board of Grace Polaris Church shall be known as the Elder Executive Council.

The Elder Executive Council will direct, control, and inspire the church through careful establishment of broad written policies reflecting the Elder Executive Council's values and perspectives. The Elder Executive Council's major policy focus will be on the intended long-term impacts of the mission (ends), not on the administrative or programmatic means of attaining those effects.

### **4.1 Elder Executive Council Members**

Nine elders shall make up the Elder Executive Council as follows:

- A. Lead Pastor
- B. Moderator
- C. Vice Moderator
- D. Immediate Past Moderator
- E. Three Lay Elders
- F. Executive Pastor
- G. One Staff Elder

The Executive Pastor and Staff Elder are non-voting members of the Elder Executive Council. Four voting members shall constitute a quorum. The Lay Elders shall be chosen by the College of Elders. Each shall serve a three-year staggered term with one being elected each year. The Staff Elder will be appointed by the Lead Pastor.

Limit of Term:

The Lay Elder's elected term shall be limited to one three-year

term without a period of absence from the board. Time served as an appointed member, serving less than a three-year term, is not to be taken into consideration.

#### **4.2 Elder Executive Council Responsibilities**

The Elder Executive Council shall:

- A. Generally meet on a monthly basis.
- B. Communicate governance decisions to the College of Elders on a regular basis.
- C. Be chaired by the Moderator of the College of Elders.
- D. May seek input from the College of Elders.
- E. Recognize the lack of authority vested in individuals except when explicitly acting on behalf of the Elder Executive Council.
- F. Support the legitimacy and authority of the final determination of the Elder Executive Council on any matter, without regard to the member's personal position on the issue.
- G. Not seek to exercise individual authority over the organization or its staff.
- H. Oversee the governance of the church by setting parameters on the Lead Pastor's behavior and decision making that express the mind and will of the Elder Executive Council, as well as policies in areas such as Elder Executive Council member behavior, communication, and delegation.
- I. Evaluate Lead Pastor's performance.
- J. Set Lead Pastor compensation.
- K. Accept the Annual Budget and present to the congregation for approval.
- L. Select an Auditor for the Annual Audit.
- M. Receive the Annual Audit.
- N. Approve Housing Allowance of Pastors.
- O. Approve Membership Transfers.

#### **4.3 Elder Executive Council Committees**

The Elder Executive Council may establish committees to help it in carrying out its own governance responsibilities when deemed appropriate. To preserve Elder Executive Council integrity, committees will be used sparingly and ordinarily in an ad hoc capacity and will not interfere with direction from Elder Executive Council to Lead Pastor.

- A. Elder Executive Council committees shall:
  - 1. Be made up of elders and church members.
  - 2. Not exercise authority over staff.
  - 3. Report their findings/recommendations to the Elder Executive Council.
- B. The following committees serve the Elder Executive Council:
  - 1. Policy Review:

The Policy Review Committee will assist the Elder Executive Council by preparing policy alternatives and implications for Elder Executive Council deliberation.
  - 2. Council Development
  - 3. Executive Care & Compensation:

The Executive Care & Compensation Committee, consisting of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, immediate past Moderator, and two (2) other non-staff Elders appointed by the Moderator, shall meet with the Lead Pastor periodically to review his vision and programs for the church and his plan to meet his objectives. A formal evaluation shall be conducted annually by the committee to assess his performance and accomplishments and will report their evaluation to the Elder Executive Council.
  - 4. Audit Committee:

The Audit Committee's role is to act on behalf of the Elder Executive Council and oversee all material aspects of the church's financial reporting, control, and audit functions. The Audit Committee's role includes a particular focus on the qualitative aspects of financial reporting, church processes for the management of risk, and compliance with significant, applicable tax, legal, ethical, and regulatory requirements.

#### **4.4 Delegation to the Lead Pastor**

Clear lines of communication and reporting are essential, and therefore only decisions of the full Elder Executive Council, acting as a body, are binding on the Lead Pastor. Accordingly:

- A. Only officially passed motions of the Elder Executive Council are binding on the Lead Pastor.
- B. Decisions or instructions of individual Elder Executive Council members, officers, or committees are not binding on the Lead Pastor except in rare instances when the Elder

Executive Council has specifically authorized such exercises of authority.

- C. In the case of Elder Executive Council members or committees requesting information or assistance without committee authorization, the Lead Pastor can refuse such requests which require, in the Lead Pastor's opinion, a material amount of staff time or funds or which are disruptive.
- D. Should the Lead Pastor wish to submit information to, receive advice, or obtain clarification from the Elder Executive Council, he may request a meeting of the Elder Executive Council for such a purpose.
- E. The Lead Pastor may consult with individual Elder Executive Council members at any time. Individual member's responses are not to be construed as an action of the board.

#### **4.5 Communication to the Lead Pastor**

The Elder Executive Council will communicate its instruction to the Lead Pastor through written policies that prescribe the organizational ends to be achieved, and describe organizational situations and actions to be avoided, delegating to the Lead Pastor the authority for operational decisions which are in the approved budget and which demonstrate a reasonable interpretation of these policies. Accordingly:

- A. The Elder Executive Council will develop policies instructing the Lead Pastor to achieve specified results, for specified recipients, at a specified cost.
  - 1. These policies will be developed systematically from the broadest, most general level to more defined levels.
  - 2. These policies will be called Ends Policies, (akin to Mission).
- B. The Elder Executive Council will develop policies that limit the latitude the Lead Pastor may exercise in choosing the organizational means.
  - 1. These limiting policies will describe those practices, activities, decisions, and circumstances that would be unacceptable to the council even if they were to be effective.
  - 2. These policies will be developed systematically from the broadest, most general level to more defined levels.
  - 3. These policies will be called Operational Parameters.

4. The Elder Executive Council will never prescribe organizational means delegated to the Lead Pastor.
  5. As long as the Lead Pastor uses any reasonable interpretation of the Elder Executive Council's Ends Policies and Operational Parameters, the Lead Pastor is authorized to establish all further policies, make all decisions, take all actions, establish all practices, and pursue all activities. Such decisions of the Lead Pastor shall have full force and authority as if decided by the Elder Executive Council.
- C. The Elder Executive Council may change its Ends Policies and Operational Parameters, thereby changing the latitude of choice given to the Lead Pastor, shifting the boundary between Elder Executive Council and Lead Pastor's domains. However, as long as any particular delegation is in place, the Elder Executive Council will respect and support the Lead Pastor's reasonable choices.

#### **4.6 Relationship Between Lead Pastor & Elder Executive Council**

Elder Executive Council, or individual council members, shall not:

- A. View anyone other than the Lead Pastor as the official link to the church.
- B. Hold anyone other than the Lead Pastor accountable for organizational performance.
- C. Exercise authority over staff persons who report directly or indirectly to the Lead Pastor.
- D. Evaluate, either formally or informally, any staff member other than the Lead Pastor.

## **5.0 Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor is to lead the staff, congregation, and Elders in carrying out the mission and vision of the church by making decisions and setting strategies within the parameters (policies) set by the Elder Executive Council.

### **5.1 Responsibilities**

The Lead Pastor shall:

- A. Shepherd of the flock at Grace Polaris Church.
- B. Report to the Elder Executive Council.

- C. Lead the staff and congregation.
- D. Present his vision to the Elder Executive Council for acceptance.
- E. Manage the daily operations of the ministry through the church staff.
- F. Be free to set up/disband advisory committees as desired. (Advisory committees have no power over the Lead Pastor but are used by the Lead Pastor for their expertise in specific areas. They serve at the will of the Lead Pastor).
- G. Create the annual budget and present it to the Elder Executive Council.
- H. Be responsible for the staff performance toward budget.
- I. Create an Organizational Chart illustrating his view of responsibilities within the ministry.
- J. Be responsible for the development of job descriptions for staff positions and evaluations.
- K. Be responsible for hiring, terminating, and assigning/re-assigning of staff.
- L. Lead and assign the pulpit ministry.

## **5.2 Relationship Between Lead Pastor & Elder Executive Council**

The Elder Executive Council, or its individual council members, shall not:

- A. View anyone other than the Lead Pastor as the official link to the church.
- B. Hold anyone other than the Lead Pastor accountable for organizational performance.
- C. Exercise authority over staff persons who report directly or indirectly to the Lead Pastor.
- D. Evaluate, either formally or informally, any staff member other than the Lead Pastor.

## **5.3 Qualifications**

- A. The Lead Pastor will adhere absolutely to the Statement of Faith set forth in the Bylaws.
- B. The Lead Pastor must meet the qualifications of an elder set forth in Internal Structure Policy 3.8(1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9).
- C. The Lead Pastor must be fully ordained by the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

#### **5.4 Selection**

When a vacancy occurs in the position of Lead Pastor:

- A. The Moderator shall appoint a search committee with the majority of its members being elders.
- B. The committee shall be approved by a majority vote of the College of Elders.
- C. The search committee shall consider and recommend candidates who meet the qualifications in accordance with Internal Structure Policy 5.3.
- D. The congregation shall cast written votes on the candidate submitted by the College of Elders at any regular business meeting or any special meeting called for that purpose.
- E. The affirmative vote by written ballot of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present and voting shall be necessary to approve the call of the Lead Pastor.

#### **5.5 Pastoral Review**

Review of the Lead Pastor consisting of the Moderator, Vice-Moderator, immediate past Moderator, and two other non-staff Elders appointed by the Moderator, shall meet with the Lead Pastor periodically to review his vision and programs for the church and his plan to meet his objectives. A formal evaluation shall be conducted every three years by the committee to assess his performance and accomplishments and will report their evaluation to the College of Elders.

#### **5.6 Removal**

If at any time any member becomes aware of a rising opposition to the Lead Pastor,

- A. The member may bring the matter to any elder.
- B. The elder shall then investigate and discuss the matter with the Lead Pastor.
- C. If the elder deems the matter unresolved, he will refer it to the College of Elders through the Moderator.
- D. If the matter still remains unresolved, the College of Elders shall present the matter to the congregation at a specially called meeting to decide whether the Lead Pastor should be removed or retained.
- E. The vote shall be by written ballot, and a majority of the members present and voting in favor of removal shall be required to remove the Lead Pastor.



1. If a vote is to be taken at a regularly scheduled Sunday church service, it shall be by paper ballot.
2. Detailed notice of the items to be voted on in a Sunday service must be placed in the church bulletin two (2) successive Sundays in advance of the Sunday the vote is to be taken.
3. Non-member attenders may also vote, but their ballots shall not be included in the official tally.

## **6.0 Deacons & Deaconesses**

The College of Deacons is composed of those men and women who want to serve in support-related activities and tasks in the area of care, hospitality, and service (1 Timothy 3:11).

### **6.1 Qualifications**

Each deacon shall meet the biblical qualifications of a deacon (1 Timothy 3:8-13; Acts 6:3). They must be a member of the church for at least one year so that the church may observe their character.

### **6.2 Responsibilities**

Deacons and deaconesses are responsible to implement the College of Elders' direction because of their affirmed lifestyle (1 Timothy 3:8-13). They model service because they function according to their God-given spiritual giftedness (Acts 6:3; 1 Corinthians 12:18) in all they do.

### **6.3 Selection**

The Deacon Administrative Committee shall prepare a list of candidates for the office of deacon or deaconess and shall submit the list to the College of Elders for approval.

- A. Once deacons and deaconesses are approved by the College of Elders, their names shall be published in the Sunday church bulletin and submitted to the congregation for approval.
- B. Any member casting a negative vote for a candidate shall, within two days following the election, make an appointment with a member of the College of Elders to discuss the reason for his vote. Failure of the member to make such an appointment shall constitute withdrawal of the negative vote.

C. Should the reason for the negative vote indicate failure of the candidate to satisfy the qualifications for deacon, a committee composed of elders, appointed by the Moderator, shall investigate the complaint (1 Corinthians 6:4,5).

1. If the complaint is determined to be valid, the candidate shall be asked to withdraw their application for deaconship and shall not be eligible for deaconship.

2. If the complaint is such that it can be rectified, the person in question can be reconsidered following the same procedure (Galatians 6:1).

#### **6.4 Term of Office**

Once a person becomes a deacon, they become a member of the College of Deacons for a term of five years. At the end of their term, they can choose to serve an additional five-year term, request to be placed on inactive status, or end their service as a deacon.

A. A deacon can continue to serve additional five-year terms as long as they so desire.

B. If an inactive deacon wishes to return to active status, they must be approved by the Deacon Administrative Committee but do not need to be reelected.

C. A deacon's term shall commence the day they are approved by the congregation.

#### **6.5 Removal or Resignation**

A deacon may be removed from their office for the reasons and in accordance with the procedures set forth in Internal Structure Policy 3.14. A deacon may resign by submitting a written letter of resignation to the Deacon Administrative Committee.

#### **6.6 Administrative Committee**

A. The Deacon Administrative Committee shall be composed of up to ten deacons, each of whom will serve a five-year term. Those terms will be arranged so that two members retire each year and two new members are appointed.

B. The members of the committee shall be nominated by the Deacon Administrative Committee and approved by the College of Elders first, and then by the congregation.

C. The term of office shall commence on July 1.

D. The function of the Deacon Administrative Committee is:

1. To develop, organize, coordinate, and oversee the activities of the College of Deacons, including the administration of ordinances.
2. To oversee the service of members of the congregation who are assigned to assist the deacons.