

GRACE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

CONSTITUTION

February, 1994

ARTICLE I. AFFILIATION

This congregation affiliates itself with the Evangelical Free Church of America and shall, whenever possible, send delegates to their conferences, support their home and foreign missions and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the congregation itself may decide.

ARTICLE II. NAME

The name of this organization shall be Grace Evangelical Free Church of Beulah/Hazen, North Dakota.

ARTICLE III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of his will for the salvation of men and the divine and final authority for Christian faith and life.
2. In one God, creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, he arose bodily from the dead, ascended into Heaven, where at the right hand of the majesty on high he is now our High Priest and Advocate.
4. That ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for Godly living and service.
5. That man was created in the image of God, but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained
6. That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and his resurrection can provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and thus become the children of God.
7. That water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as a means of salvation.

8. That the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which he is the head.
9. That only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
10. That Jesus Christ is the Lord and head of the Church and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.
11. In the personal premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this blessed hope has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
12. In the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

ARTICLE IV. PURPOSE

The sole purpose of this organization shall be to glorify God through edification of all who attend, through obedience to the Word of God, through fellowship of the believers, and through winning of the unsaved to Christ. This group of believers shall at all times seek to maintain an evangelistic emphasis and make the salvation of souls the goal of all its activities (1 Thessalonians 1:5-10), and to engage in such religious, educational, charitable, and benevolent work as the Constitution and By-laws of this organization may determine.

ARTICLE V. MEMBERSHIP

The membership of this congregation shall consist of individuals who confess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their savior; who have assurance of salvation; whose life bears witness of their confession; and who will abide by the Constitution and By-laws of this congregation.

ARTICLE VI. OFFICERS

The officers shall consist of a board of Elders. The number of elders on this board shall be determined by the size of the congregation and its needs.

ARTICLE VII. PROPERTY RIGHTS

1. This congregation shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property in its own name as is authorized by the laws of the state of North Dakota. It shall also have the power to mortgage and encumber all or any part of the church property, and to borrow or raise money or other assets of any kind, for the furtherance of the Lord's work.
2. In the event that this congregation shall ever dissolve, provision shall be made for all liabilities of the church. Any remaining property, real and personal, shall return to the

local district of the Evangelical Free Church of America to enable it to renew the work or use the value thereof for further gospel ministries. No member shall personally be entitled to any property of the church.

3. If division occurs in the congregation, the name and property shall be retained by those who uphold this constitution.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS AND REVISIONS

1. Amendments and revisions to this constitution may be made at a regular congregational meeting of the church by an affirmative vote by secret ballot of two-thirds of the members present, when said proposed amendments or revisions have been presented in written form and discussed at a regular congregational meeting at least three months prior to the time of their adoption for vote on the amendment or revision. All members must be notified by mail of proposed amendments or revisions at least thirty days prior to their adoption.

2. Article I (Affiliation), Article III (Statement of Faith), Article IV (Purpose), Article V (Membership), Article VII (Property Rights), and Article VIII Paragraph 2. (Amendments and Revisions) of this Constitution shall not be changed or eliminated.

ARTICLE IX. AUTHORITY

All authority in the church is vested in the voting membership of the church, hereafter referred to in this Constitution and associated By-laws as the congregation. The congregation shall decide upon the calling of the pastoral staff, the admission of applicants for membership, the purchase or sale of church real property, the selection of officers, the establishment of fiscal budgets, and such other matters as it may determine.

The church shall function in full compliance with By-laws approved by the voting members. The By-laws will define the church government and delegation of responsibilities for carrying out the stated purpose of the church.

GRACE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF BEULAH/HAZEN
BY-LAWS
ARTICLE I. MEMBERSHIP

- I. Membership requirements
 - A. Profess Jesus as Lord and Savior.
 - B. Instruction in a ministry orientation class.
 - C. Evidence of obedience to the Word.
 - D. Agree with statement of faith and abide with the constitution.
 - E. Members must sign a covenant of membership annually by January 31st.

- II. Application
 - A. Request for membership is made with an elder.
 - B. Testimony of faith is given to the elders.
 - C. Names of prospective members will be placed in the bulletin for a two week period.

- III. Admission to membership
 - A. New members shall share their testimony as empowered by the Holy Spirit with the congregation at a congregational gathering
 - B. Candidates for membership will be recommended by the elders and approved by a vote of 75% of members present.
 - C. New members received into fellowship and welcomed at a congregational meeting.
 - D. Membership needs to be requested by non-members and associates.

- IV. Associate membership
 - A. Associate members are those who:
 - 1. Moved away, plan to return and those under 18 years of age, or are unable to participate in regular ministry.
 - B. Requirements of associate membership
 - 1. Must be requested.
 - 2. Must follow requirements of membership.
 - 3. Do not have voting rights.
 - 4. Upon reaching 18 may request full membership.
 - 5. Young people are encouraged to become full members.

- V. Removal from membership
 - A. A member may be removed from membership for any of the following:
 - 1. Joining another church
 - 2. Death
 - 3. Requesting removal of name
 - 4. Absence from church for a year and who shows no interest in the church through attendance, support, or communications.
 - 5. Not signing covenant of membership.
 - 6. Discipline.

- VI. Discipline

- A. Shall be in accordance with Matthew 18.
 - 1. The person shall be confronted by the party who was sinned against.
 - 2. If reconciliation does not occur, then bring a third or fourth person to act as a mediator and witness.
 - 3. If the conflict is not resolved then the matter shall be brought before the elders and then to the congregation for a vote of removal.
 - B. The removal of a member from membership and fellowship occurs when the following steps have taken place. The member is:
 - 1. Living disobediently to the Word of God
 - 2. Remains unrepentant after the counsel of the elders according to Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 6:1
 - 3. Recommended by the Elders for removal from fellowship
 - 4. Approved by 75% vote of members present at a duly called congregational meeting
- VII. Covenant of Membership
- A. As a member of Grace Evangelical Free Church I covenant before God and these believers:
 - 1. To walk in holiness and Christian love by the aid of the Holy Spirit; to encourage the spirituality of other Christians and to sustain the worship, evangelism, teaching, fellowship, and the doctrine of the church. (1 Peter 1:13-22; Galatians 5:16-26; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42)
 - 2. To cultivate my spiritual life with Christ; to endeavor to bring my family to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; and to assist and promote the spiritual growth of my family. (John 15:1-10; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Colossians 3:18-21)
 - 3. To serve and love the fellow believers of this church; to help and aid them in times of need or distress; to speak to them in courtesy and gentleness; to comfort and encourage them; to strive for peace and always be ready for reconciliation. (Galatians 5:13, 6:10; Ephesians 4:32)
 - 4. To contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the church as God prospers me. (1 Corinthians 16:2; 2 Corinthians 9:6,12)
 - 5. To witness faithfully to the saving and keeping power of Jesus Christ through my words and life so that I may bring men, women, and children to saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20, 5:13-16; Acts 1:8)

ARTICLE II. THE CONGREGATION

- I. Congregational responsibilities toward pastor.
 - A. The congregation shall respect and heed the pastor and other spiritual leaders as ones who must give to God an account for their actions. Prayer and encouragement should be made for the pastor and his family that his work shall be in joy and not grief. (Hebrews 3:17-18)
- II. Other responsibilities.

- A. The congregation at a properly called business meeting shall prayerfully find the mind of Christ in regard to:
 - 1. Selection and review of all elders and officers.
 - 2. Calling of pastoral staff.
 - 3. Removal of pastoral staff.
 - 4. Discipline of elders.
 - 5. Purchase of property.
 - 6. New building programs.
 - 7. Annual budget.

ARTICLE III. LEADERSHIP TEAM

I. Description

- A. The leadership team shall be comprised of all pastors and ministry leaders of the church. They shall attempt to meet at least once a month to cast vision, plan and coordinate ministry.

II. Ministry leaders

- A. Ministry leaders are those leading adult ministries, youth ministries, children's ministries, worship, secretary, treasurer and others so designated.

1. Qualifications

- a. Ministry leaders should show a calling and giftedness toward the ministry and have been apprenticed for ministry.

2. Selection

- a. Members of the congregation are encouraged to volunteer or submit names to the elder board for ministry leaders.
- b. The ministry leaders will be selected by the elders and approved by 75% of voting membership.

3. Responsibilities

- a. Attend leadership team meetings.
- b. Design ministry plan.
- c. Budget ministry.
- d. Execute ministry plan.
- e. Evaluate ministry.

ARTICLE IV. PASTORS AND CHURCH OFFICERS

I. Pastor(s)

- A. Call: A search committee shall be composed of at least one elder and others so elected by the congregation. Working with the district office, the search committee must seek candidacy from prospective pastors and make recommendation to the elder board. The elder board must approve the candidate by unanimous vote. The candidate must be approved by the congregation by at least a 75% affirmative vote.

- B. Responsibilities: The pastor and his wife, in harmony with the membership covenant, shall become members of the church and assume all duties and

responsibilities of membership and its leadership. The pastor(s) shall be voting member(s) of the elder board. The pastor shall devote himself to the congregation continually in prayer and ministry of the word (Acts 6:4). He shall delegate authority, where necessary, to others that they may share in the Lords service and ease his burden (Acts 6:1). He shall shepherd the flock by example, willingly, with humility (1 Peter 5:2-3). The pastor shall be encouraged to communicate difficult issues concerning marriage, baptism, divorce and any other issues affecting the spiritual life of the congregation with the elder board and seek their counsel and spiritual insight (Proverbs 11:14).

Marriage: The Pastor(s) will not marry any couple seeking marriage without: (1) Pre-marital Counseling that is completed at the discretion of the Pastor; and (2) Full agreement by the Elder Board with the Pastor's recommendation.

- C. Regulation: In the event of a pastoral termination, the church chairman shall with the consent of 75% of the members of the congregation, give the pastor or pastoral staff a two month written notification.

The pastor or pastoral staff upon accepting another call shall give the elders two months written notice of termination.

II. Chairman

- A. Shall be a member in good standing of the elder board.
- B. Responsibilities include presiding at congregational meetings and aiding the pastor in leading the flock.
- C. Nominations shall be offered by members of the congregation to a member of the elder board two weeks prior to the election.
- D. The chairman will be chosen from among all nominations by majority vote of the congregation.
- E. The election will be held at the April congregational meeting while responsibilities beginning September 1.

III. Secretary

- A. The secretary shall be considered a part of the leadership board and shall assume all stated responsibilities pursuant to Article 3 Section II.
- B. The secretary shall keep the official minutes of all congregational meetings as well as the church calendar of events and the official role of members including the covenant of membership

IV. Church treasurer

- A. The treasurer shall be considered a part of the leadership board and shall assume all stated responsibilities for leaders pursuant to Article 3 Section II..
- B. The treasurer is responsible for the collection, deposit and dispersal of all funds.
- C. The treasurer will act as chairman of a finance committee whose responsibility is to set the annual budget. The committee will consist of the leadership team members and interested volunteers.

V. Elders

- A. Call: Men who obtain a good testimony by faith who are called by the Holy Spirit may be appointed as Elders (Hebrews 11:2 & Acts 20:28). Elders must strive to live up to Titus 1:5-9 and Timothy 3:1-7. Any man who aspires to be an Elder must be a member of the church and must meet with the elders to review the qualifications and responsibilities. The elders must approve the individual by

unanimous consensus and make recommendation to the congregation. The congregation must approve the candidate by 75% affirmative vote.

- B. Responsibilities: Elders are called to: oversee willingly and not for dishonest gain, to shepherd the flock by example and in all humility (1 Peter 5:1-4), to pray for the sick (James 5:14), and to pray diligently for the pastor, his family, and the congregation. Elders are called to: study the word in order to exhort and convict (Titus 1:9), and to oversee in all humility being of the same mind toward one another, not wise in their own opinions. (Romans 12:16).

VI. Discipline

- A. Shall be in accordance with Mathew 18 and Article VI of the By Laws.
 - 1. The person shall be approached by the party who was sinned against.
 - 2. If reconciliation does not occur then bring a third or fourth person to act as a mediator and witness.
 - 3. If the conflict is not resolved, then the matter shall be brought before the elders and then to the congregation for a vote of removal.
- B. No accusation shall be made against an elder or pastor except by written complaint of 2 or 3 witnesses and given to an elder. If an elder or pastor is found to live contrary to the Word of God, he shall be admonished in brotherly love and/or shall be rebuked publicly (1 Timothy 5: 19-20). If there is no repentance, the church shall request his resignation.

ARTICLE V. BUSINESS MEETINGS

- I. The ministry of the church shall be planned on trimesters, September-December, January-May, June-August.
- II. Three congregational meetings will be held:
 - A. January- Annual financial reporting and budget approval
 - B. April- selection of church leaders with ministry to begin officially September 1.
 - C. August- presentation plan for the coming year.
- III. A quorum is necessary at any business meeting which requires a vote by the congregation. A quorum is 1/3 of the members
- IV. Special meetings can be called at the request of the elders or 25% of the members of the church. The agenda of the meeting will be announced two Sunday mornings prior to the meeting.

ARTICLE VI. FISCAL YEAR

- I. The Fiscal year will be January 1 to December 31.

ARTICLE VII. AMENDMENTS

- I. These by-laws may be amended by a 75% vote of members present at a congregational meeting. The proposed amendment shall be recommended by the board of elders and distributed to the congregation at least four Sundays prior to the meeting.

* Amended 8/28/03
