

By-Laws of Grace Community Church of Champaign, Illinois

Revised: August, 2009

Lead Pastor at time of revision: Jerris Duncan

Elder/s at time of revision: Jerris Duncan

ARTICLE I Mission/Vision

Mission: We exist to experience the grace of God in our lives and to extend the grace of God to our community.

Vision: Passion for God, Connecting People, Community Transformation

Passion: One More

ARTICLE II Associations

LifeChurch.tv - Grace Community Church is part of the Lifechurch.tv network of churches. Our connection stems from a desire to share resources for the benefit of the Kingdom of God. There is no financial commitment to Lifechurch.tv, nor does Lifechurch.tv have any governing power over Grace Community Church.

Willow Creek Association - we are a part of the WCA for the purpose of identification with like minded churches, networking with church leaders and use of Willow Creek resources.

ARTICLE III Statement of Faith

- We believe in God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit – **Trinity**
 - Genesis 1:1, 26-27, 3:22, Psalm 90:2, Matthew 28:19, 1Peter 1:2, II Corinthians 13:14
- We believe the local church is a **body of Christ followers** who are called to live in life giving **community**.
 - Act 2:42-47
- We believe a person becomes a Christ follower when they **voluntarily** acknowledge their need for Jesus. We believe all Christ followers are called to live the way of Jesus in this world and will ultimately be with God in heaven when the physical body dies.
 - Romans 10:9-10, Luke 10:27, Matthew 8:11, 10:32
- We believe the **Bible** is the ageless story of the relationship between God and His creation. The writers were inspired by God and so its words and stories are **truth** to guide our relationship with God and others.
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17

ARTICLE IV Grace Community Church Governance

Grace Community Church is not a committee driven or voting church. The pastoral staff will give vision and direction to the church. The pastoral staff will work in conjunction with the elders and the management team to create systems of mutual support and accountability.

Spiritual Leadership

(Ephesians 4: 15-16)

The head of Grace Community Church is Jesus Christ. We strive to never knowingly make a decision for the church that would in any way contradict Jesus teaching. We trust the leadership of the Holy Spirit, as we discern and implement the vision for our church.

Human Leadership

On a human level, the leadership of Grace Community Church is directed by the elders, pastoral staff, management team, support staff and volunteers. A job description for each area of leadership will be kept on file in the church office.

Elders are covenant partners of Grace Community Church, who provide watch care for pastoral staff and give spiritual leadership to the church. Elders use their gifts to ensure the church remains true to her vision, that we do not knowingly contradict the teachings of Jesus, and to guard the unity of the body of Christ. There will be at least one elder partnered with each pastoral staff person for support, accountability and spiritual development.

The Pastoral Staff direct the day to day operations and ministry of the church. The staff is paid to spend their time giving visionary leadership to the church. The staff is expected to recruit, train and encourage volunteers to accomplish the vision of the church. We believe casting vision and building teams happens best when the staff is actively involved in each others lives and the lives of church members.

Management Team is comprised of volunteer leaders who are empowered by the church to oversee the legal and financial aspects of the church in regard to ministries, buildings and facilities.

Support Staff are positions such as secretary, custodian, and data input. Each of these staff will report to the appropriate pastoral staff.

Volunteer Staff are covenant partners who agree to give leadership to a specific area of ministry. All volunteer staff team leaders will report to a designated member of the pastoral staff.

ARTICLE V Church Leadership

We believe that God created men and women in His image. God's ideal, from creation, was for men and women to use their gifts and talents to give leadership. When the story of God and His creation is read comprehensively, it consistently speaks to an equality of men and women in giftedness, status and ministry. We believe leaders should be qualified men and women who are covenant partners with the church.

ARTICLE VI Election and Term of Elders

From what is implied in scripture, the process of election and term of elders appears to be given to the local church to discern and determine. In the New Testament, elders were appointed by church founders and spiritual leaders. Biblical qualifications of elders are found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

Grace Community Church Elder Selection Process

In September of each year, the current elder/s will determine the number of positions, if any, to be filled for the coming year. If a determination is made that more elders are needed the following process shall be initiated:

1. The current elders will come together and prayerfully select men and women from the body to consider.

2. The elder candidates will be contacted and asked to spend 30 days in prayerful evaluation and self-appraisal in light of scriptural qualifications. Anyone may withdraw their name if they do not believe they meet the qualifications of eldership or they do not desire to be an elder.
3. In October, the pastor and selected elders will conduct interviews with elder candidates. After prayer and careful consideration of each nominee, the pastor will make recommendations to the elders to confirm or deny eldership of nominees. Reasons for and against confirmation will be clearly communicated to the nominee and the elders.
4. The names of prospective elders will be brought before the Grace Community Partners, who will be given 30 days to show “cause” why any one of the prospective elders would not be qualified to serve. In accordance with Matt. 18:15 and Matt 5:24, any such “cause” must first be expressed and discussed with the prospective elder, then the lead pastor, and finally brought to the elders for discussion.
5. At the end of the 30 day period the elder candidates will be presented to the church for affirmation and a service of dedication. This service will be an annual service to affirm and dedicate new elders or to re-affirm the service of current elders.
6. Elders are asked to serve a one year term subject to review, re-commitment, and re-affirmation by the lead pastor and church each year.
7. If for any reason an elder is unable to complete their term, the lead pastor and elders will determine the process to fill the vacated position.

ARTICLE VII Pastoral Staff

Grace Community Church Staff Member

We believe all staff members are gifted by God to give leadership to our church. Staff members are selected based on several criteria:

1. Must be of joyful disposition and committed to doing life together with other staff, elders and partners in the body called Grace Community Church.
2. Complete commitment to our model of church.
3. A willingness/desire to think outside or inside the box.
4. Willingness to do whatever it takes to see the Kingdom of God prevail.
5. Be in agreement with the mission, vision and statement of faith.

The elders and lead pastor are responsible for the watch care of the pastoral staff and will monitor staff effectiveness and morale. Staff salaries will be determined by the lead pastor and management team with advisement from the elders. Salary adjustments will be made as a review process is completed for each staff person.

ARTICLE VIII Lead Pastor

Lead Pastor

In view of the scriptures concept of spiritual gifts, the lead pastor, like any other member of the body, should seek to minister within their area of giftedness.

In addition to his shepherding role as an elder, the lead pastor is responsible for the theological teaching, strategic leadership, and vision casting for the body. His goal is to mature believers and equip them for ministry. The lead pastor is also responsible to give leadership to the staff in a responsible and thoughtful way. He is to guide and inspire the staff in a life giving manner. The lead pastor should be continually raising the “leadership lid”, so the staff has complete freedom to dream, create, and minister to their fullest potential.

Selection of the Lead Pastor

In the event of vacancy of the position of lead pastor, the elders and staff are responsible to determine the process by which the position is to be filled. The elders and staff will work in conjunction with the management team to determine the salary and benefits package. The elders and staff are responsible to keep the church informed as to the progress of the search process.

ARTICLE VIX Management Team

The management team will be appointed by the elders and lead pastor. Team members are asked to commit to a one year term of service. (See the management team manual for full description and expectations). Those who serve on the management team will be asked to use their gifts and talents to help the pastoral staff and church make the best decisions regarding the legal and financial positions of Grace Community Church. When the team deems it necessary they will call upon the elders to pray and give counsel regarding major decisions which would in any way affect the physical, theological, or functional direction of Grace Community Church.

ARTICLE X Support Staff

See job descriptions on file in the church office

ARTICLE XI Volunteers

See job descriptions on file in the church office

ARTILCE XII Renewable Covenant Partnership

Grace Community Church asks those who desire to join the church enter into a *Renewable Covenant Partnership*. The partnership shall be renewed during the month of January each new year.

Covenant Partnership classes will be offered as often as deemed necessary by the pastoral staff.

Each person who signs a covenant partnership form understands and agrees to the following commitments:

1. Has a personal relationship with Jesus or is investigating the claims of Jesus
2. Has been or desires to be baptized in accordance with the teaching of Jesus.
3. Agrees with the mission, vision and statement of faith.
4. Agrees to the vital points of investment and accountability...
 - a. Attendance – Act 2:46
 - b. Personal investment – Acts 2:44
 - c. No gossip covenant – Acts 2:47
 - d. Community Transformation – concern and ministry
 - e. Intimate relationship with God – devotion and righteousness
 - f. Family and professional life – character and integrity

ARTICLE XIII Real Estate and Property

1. Title to all real estate and property shall be in the name of the church. The management team, working in conjunction with the elders and staff, shall be responsible for purchasing, maintaining and selling all property on behalf of the church.
2. All meetings events and activities conducted in the facilities of the church shall be consistent with the mission and vision of this church, and in harmony with the statement of faith.
3. No permanent property may be installed or removed from the church without the consent of the elders, staff and management team.

4. Consistent with government requirements, upon liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of this church, the property, facilities and funds will not inure to the benefit of any private individual. All assets will be dissolved and debts retired. After all debt has been resolved, equity will be used for the following:
 - a. Grace Community Church will offer up to six months of severance pay for all salaried employees who lost income as a direct result of the dissolution or abandonment of Grace Community Church.
 - b. Remaining funds will be given to a mission organization as the last act of the elders, staff, management team, or remaining partners.

ARTICLE XIV Offerings and Funds

This congregation shall be financed by tithes and offerings and other approved fund-raising activities from its members and friends. Moneys may be given into the general fund or into designated fund(s) that the pastoral staff or management team may establish and terminate as necessary to accomplish specific purposes.

ARTICLE XV Amendments

These By-Laws may be amended by the lead pastor and/or the management team. All by-law changes must be submitted in writing to the staff and elders for prayer and consideration. If a valid change or addition is deemed necessary the request will be forward to the management team for consideration. A unanimous vote by the lead pastor and management team shall be required for the passage of an amendment. If a unanimous vote is not reached, an agreed upon period of time of tabling the amendment must pass before a second vote is taken. If an amendment cannot be unanimously agreed upon the issue will be tabled. At least two weeks notice of the proposed amendment or amendments shall be given to all on the management team and staff. An announcement of the approved amendment/s shall be given in two successive church bulletins and by email to Grace Partners.