

**Grace Bible Fellowship Church, Wallingford, PA**

**Church Policy Manual**

*Updated August 2019*

**Table of Contents**

**Section A: Bylaws**

*Bylaws are enacted by the Congregation and enforced by the Elders*

**1) 2019 Bylaws**

- I. Name and Address
- II. Constitution
- III. Membership
- IV. Congregational Meetings
- V. Election of Church Officers
- VI. Other Elections
- VII. Board of Elders
- VIII. Church Committees
- IX. Board of Deacons
- X. Church Properties
- XI. Amendments
- XII. Indemnification of Elders, Deacons, Officers, Employees, and Agents
- XIII. Miscellaneous

**Section B: Official Policies**

*Official policies are enacted by the Board of Elders and enforced by the Elders and Staff*

**2) Purpose and Vision**

- a. Purpose and Vision of Grace BFC (*March 2009*)

**3) Governance**

- a. Whistle Blower Policy (*March 2019*)
- b. Gift Acceptance Policy (*March 2019*)
- c. Conflicts of Interest Policy (*March 2019*)
- d. Investment (*July 2016*)

**4) Elders**

- a. The Role of the Elder (*September 2009*)

**5) Employees**

- a. Vacation Policy (*March 2019*)

**6) Membership and Church Records**

- a. Membership Related Policies (*compiled December 2018*)
- b. Expectations Associated with Membership (*August 2013*)
- c. Elders Motions Regarding Official Records (*January 2017*)

## **7) Child Protection**

- a. Child Protection Policy (*August 2018*)
- b. Child Abuse Reporting Procedure (*August 2018*)
- c. Discipline Involving Children and Youth (*August 2018*)
- d. Child Volunteer Code of Ethics and Rules (*April 2015*)

## **8) Worship**

- a. Philosophy of Public and Corporate Worship (*April 2017*)
- b. Practice of the Lord's Supper (*June 2017*)

## **9) Church Facilities**

- a. Facility Use Policy (*August 2019*)
- b. Grace BFC Wedding Policy (*March 2019*)
- c. Severe Weather Policy - GBFC Public Services and/or Sponsored Events (*January 2017*)

## **10) Media and Web**

- a. Media Use Policy – Sound, Image, Video and other Recordings (*March 2019*)

## **Section C: Guidelines**

*Guidelines are given by the Elders to provide guidance to the staff who can act on them at their discretion*

### **11) Guidelines for Church Life**

- a. Guidelines for the Assimilation of Sunday Visitors (*March 2019*)
- b. Guidelines for The Use of Church Facilities for Fundraising and for Ministry and Person Celebrations (*April 2017*)

## **Section D: Forms and Procedures**

*Forms and Procedures are developed by the staff to aid in implementing Policies and Guidelines*

### **12) Applications**

- a. Baptism and Membership Application
- b. Child Dedication Application
- c. Children and Youth Worker Application
- d. Children and Youth Worker Signature Page

### **13) Information Forms**

- a. Adult Information Form
- b. Child and Youth Information Form

### **14) Reservation Forms**

- a. Facility Reservation Form

### **15) Reporting Forms**

- a. Injury Report Form
- b. GBFC Child Abuse Incident Report Form
- c. Reducing the Risk Application Checklist (for Child Protection Designated Rep)

**BY-LAWS OF  
GRACE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH  
WALLINGFORD, PENNSYLVANIA**

**RATIFIED:** (Congregational Meeting Scheduled for Sept. 8 at 10:50am)

For the purpose of honoring God by worshiping Him, strengthening believers, and sharing the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ, this church shall be governed by the following by-laws:

**Article I  
Name and Address**

1. The name of the Church is: Grace Bible Fellowship Church (a Pennsylvania non-profit Corporation).
2. The address is 723 South Providence Road, Wallingford, PA, 19086.

**Article II  
Constitution**

1. The constitution of the Church consists of: (a) the "Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church" Volumes One and Two published by Conference of the Bible Fellowship Church (which includes, but is not limited to, the Articles of Faith, the form of church government, rules for church discipline, congregational meetings, church committees, and pastoral transitions), and (b) the By-Laws of Grace Bible Fellowship Church.
2. Grace Bible Fellowship Church is a member of the Bible Fellowship Church, Inc. and abides by the enactments and legislation approved by that body.
3. Grace Bible Fellowship Church is organized exclusively for charitable, religious, educational, and scientific purposes, including, for such purposes, the making of distributions to organizations that qualify as exempt organizations described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code.
4. Upon the dissolution of the organization, assets shall be distributed for one or more exempt purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or shall be distributed to the federal government, or to a state or local government, for a public purpose. Any such assets not disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction in

the county in which the principal office of the organization is then located, exclusively for such purposes or to such organization or organizations, as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

### **Article III Membership**

1. The Membership of the Church is composed of those whose lives give evidence of regeneration, who express faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, give testimony of the assurance of forgiveness of sin, have been baptized by immersion, and commit themselves to the discipline and fellowship of the Church.
2. The standards and responsibilities for Church Membership are those set forth in the "Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church." Members also commit themselves to the "Expectations and Blessings of Membership" set forth in the Church's Policy Manual.
3. Member candidates are interviewed and approved by the Board of Elders or a committee thereof. Ordained pastors on the pastoral staff are considered Members from their date of hire.
4. A person may be removed from membership at any time in accordance with the Membership policies stated in the Church's Policy Manual.

### **Article IV Congregational Meetings**

1. Congregational meetings shall be held in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the "Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church."
2. The Board of Elders shall call all Congregational meetings. Any Member may request that the Board call a congregational meeting and any such request shall be considered by the Board. Any denial of such a request must be in writing.
3. The Board of Elders shall conduct at least one Congregational meeting each year.
4. Notice of any Congregational meeting must state the date, time, place and purpose(s) for which the meeting is called. Notice shall be given at regularly scheduled services no less than fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the Congregational meeting.

## **FINAL DRAFT**

5. A quorum shall consist of twenty percent (20%) of the Members eligible to vote and present in person. Only Members of the Church who are present and have attained the age of 16 years are eligible to vote.

### **Article V Election of Church Officers**

1. Church Officers consist of Elders and Deacons.
2. Elders may seek suggestions for nominees from Members. The Board of Elders shall determine if nominees meet the stated qualifications for the office. Qualified nominees are nominated by the Board of Elders at its discretion.
3. Election of Church Officers shall take place at a congregational meeting.
4. Election of Church Officers shall be by a two thirds majority of the eligible voting members present.
5. Members have discretionary authority to establish the number of active Elders. If there are more qualified elders than are needed to serve at a particular time, the number of active elders shall be determined by a vote at a Congregational meeting upon recommendation of the Board of Elders.

### **Article VI Other Elections**

1. The Delegates for BFC Conference shall be Elders of Grace BFC. They shall be nominated by the Board of Elders and elected according to the rules of the BFC Faith and Order. One of the Delegates shall be designated as our Primary Delegate. They shall serve for a term of one year.
2. The officers of the corporation shall consist of a President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. All three corporate officers shall be Elders. The Primary Delegate to BFC Conference shall serve as President of the Corporation. The Secretary and Treasurer are nominated and elected by the Board of Elders. Corporate officers serve for a term of one year.
3. The officers of the corporation shall have the authority and shall exercise the powers and perform the duties specified by the President, the Board of Elders or these bylaws, except that in any event each officer shall exercise such powers and perform such duties as may be required by law.

### **Article VII Board of Elders**

## FINAL DRAFT

1. Elders must be male Members in full communion with the Church who live in keeping with the qualifications set forth in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9) and who have been Members for at least one year. All ordained men on the pastoral staff serve as Elders from their date of hire.
2. Each Elder serves a three-year term. There is no limit on the number of terms an Elder may serve.
3. The Board of Elders shall have the general oversight of the life and work of the Church including, but not limited to, the worship, preaching, ordinances, evangelism, visitation, discipline, finances, maintenance of the properties and business affairs of the corporation.
4. Each Elder shall annually declare in writing his agreement with the Articles of Faith and his willingness to follow the Principles of Order ("Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church"). Each Elder must also file a Conflict of Interest statement annually.
5. Two-thirds (2/3) of the Elders shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Elders. Each Elder shall be entitled to one (1) vote and the vote of the majority of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Elders. Being "present at the meeting" can mean in person or participation by phone or video connection.
6. If an Elder is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings, unless excused, his office shall become vacant for the remainder of the term. The minutes will note any excused absences.
7. Any Elder may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Secretary of the Board of Elders. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Elders shall remain open until the annual meeting of the Congregation.
8. The Board of Elders shall annually select a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.
  - A. The Chairman shall preside over the monthly Elder meetings in accordance with the Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church and the Church's By-laws. He shall publish an agenda and encourage discussion and decisions regarding the life and work of the Church for which the Board of Elders has general oversight.
  - B. The Vice-Chairman shall preside over the monthly Elder meetings in the Chairman's absence and he will perform any other responsibilities assigned to him by the Chairman and/or the Board of Elders.

C. The Secretary shall keep a record of the minutes of each meeting as well as all congregational meetings. (In his absence, the Chairman will designate another Elder as Acting Secretary for that meeting.) The Secretary shall preside over the monthly Elder meetings in the Chairman's and the Vice-Chairman's absence and he will perform any other responsibilities assigned to him by the Chairman and/or the Board of Elders.

D. The Treasurer shall have responsibility for the financial activity of the Church as well as the bookkeeping (including, but not limited to, recording receipts, reconciling bank accounts, paying invoices, payroll and budget preparation). He shall report on the financial position of the Church at each meeting of the Board of Elders. No member of the pastoral staff may be selected as Treasurer.

E. The Board of Elders may, at its discretion and from time to time, select an Assistant Treasurer to assist the Treasurer in his duties. An Assistant Treasurer need not be an Elder but must be a Member. The Assistant Treasurer shall perform any responsibilities assigned to him by the Treasurer and/or the Board of Elders. No member of the pastoral staff may be selected as Assistant Treasurer.

## **Article VIII**

### **Church Committees**

1. All Committees will regularly publish written reports of their activities to the Board of Elders.
2. The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) shall consist of three (3) non-staff elders selected annually by the Board of Elders. The purposes and duties of the PRC follow the guidelines set forth in "Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church" Volumes One and Two.
3. The Finance Committee (FC) shall be chaired by the Treasurer and consist of at least two (2) other Members. The purpose and duties of the FC include, but are not limited to, reviewing annual and interim financial statements, recommending the annual budget to the Board of Elders, and recommending financial policies to the board of Elders.
4. The Audit Committee (AC) shall consist of at least 3 Members. The AC shall verify that the quarterly and annual financial reports are accurate and provide additional accountability and oversight related to the financial affairs of the Church.
5. The Board of Elders may convene other committees at any time and at its discretion. Likewise, the Board may disband committees at any time

and at its discretion (except for any committees required by the "Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church" Volumes One and Two).

## **Article IX Board of Deacons**

1. Deacons may be male or female Members in full communion with the Church who live in keeping with the qualifications set forth in Scripture (Acts 6:6; 1 Timothy 3:8-13) and who have been Members for at least one year.
2. Each Deacon serves a three-year term except for new Deacons who serve for an initial one-year term. There is no limit on the number of terms a Deacon may serve.
3. The Board of Deacons shall have the general responsibility of sympathetic and benevolent service to Members as well as the surrounding community, showing the mercy and concern of the Church for the material and physical needs of others.
  - A. The Board of Deacons shall serve under the direction of the Board of Elders and shall report monthly to them on their actions and activities.
  - B. The Board of Elders shall have the authority to delegate to the Board of Deacons additional specific responsibilities to assist in carrying out the work and ministry of the Church.
4. Two-thirds (2/3) of the Deacons shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board of Deacons. Each Deacon shall be entitled to one (1) vote and the vote of the majority of the Deacons present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Deacons. Being "present at the meeting" can mean in person or participation by phone or video connection.
5. Any Deacon may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Secretary of the Board of Deacons. Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Deacons shall remain open until the annual meeting of the Congregation.
6. The Board of Deacons shall annually elect a Chairman, Assistant Chairman, Worship and Service Chairman, Secretary and Assistant Secretary.
  - A. The Chairman shall preside over the monthly Deacon meetings in accordance with the Faith & Order of the Bible Fellowship Church and the Church's By-laws. The Chairman shall publish an agenda



and encourage discussion and decisions regarding the responsibilities for which the Board of Deacons has oversight.

B. The Assistant Chairman shall preside over the monthly Deacon meetings in the Chairman's absence and he will perform any other responsibilities assigned to him by the Chairman and/or the Board of Deacons.

C. The Worship and Service Chairman oversees preparations for the weekly Sunday worship service and any additional preparation for services that include the ordinances of Communion and/or Baptism.

D. The Secretary shall keep a record of the minutes of each monthly meeting as well as financial records for any funds controlled by the Board of Deacons.

E. The Assistant Secretary fulfills the duties of the Secretary in his/her absence.

## **Article X Church Properties**

1. Church property is held in trust for the use of the ministry and membership of the Grace Bible Fellowship Church at 723 South Providence Road, Wallingford, PA, subject to the doctrines, laws, usages, and ministerial appointments of the BFC Conference of the Bible Fellowship Church incorporated under the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as from time to time established, made and declared by the lawful authorities of the said church, and if the said property shall be sold or encumbered, the proceeds of the sale or the encumbrance shall be applied for the use of the aforesaid, subject, however, to the provisions of the law of the church relating to abandoned church properties and of that forbidding mortgaging of real estate for current expenses.
2. In trust, both parsonages of Grace Bible Fellowship Church shall be kept, maintained, and disposed of as a place of residence for the use and occupancy of the pastors of the Bible Fellowship Church who are from time to time duly appointed in said place according to the rules and usages of said church, and/or as a place for ministry activities, and if sold, the proceeds to be used according to the rules of said church. If the congregation controlling this property shall be disbanded, the property shall be controlled and disposed of according to the rules of the Bible Fellowship Church.

**Article XI  
Amendments**

1. Amendments to these By-Laws shall be made upon recommendation of the Board of Elders and approval by two-thirds (2/3) majority of eligible Members voting at a Congregational meeting.
2. All amendments must be circulated to the Members in writing at least one (1) month prior to the Congregational meeting in which the vote is taken.
3. The Board of Elders will consider amendments proposed in writing by any Member. Any denial of such a proposal must be in writing.

**Article XII  
INDEMNIFICATION OF ELDERS, DEACONS, OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES,  
AND AGENTS**

1. The Church shall indemnify any Elder, Deacon or officer, and may indemnify any other employee or agent, who was or is a party to, or is threatened to be made a party to, or who is called as a witness in connection with, any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, other than any action by or in the right of the Church, by reason of the fact that he/she is or was an Elder, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of the Church, or is or was serving at the request of the Church as an Elder, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of another domestic or foreign corporation for profit or not-for profit, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement, actually and reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with such action, suit or proceeding if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he/she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Church, and, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, had no reasonable cause to believe his/her conduct was unlawful.
2. The Church shall indemnify any Elder, Deacon or officer, and may indemnify any other employee or agent, who was or is a party to, or is threatened to be made a party to, any threatened, pending or completed action or suit by or in the right of the Church to procure a judgment in

its favor by reason of the fact that he/she is or was a Elder, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of the Church or is or was serving at the request of the Church as a Elder, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of another domestic or foreign corporation for profit or not-for-profit, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against expenses, including attorneys/ fees, actually and reasonably incurred by him/her in connection with the defense or settlement of such action or suit if such person acted in good faith and in a manner he/she reasonably believed to be in, or not opposed to, the best interests of the Church and except that no indemnification shall be made in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such person shall have been adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his/her duty to the Church unless and only to the extent that the court of common pleas of the county in which the registered office of the Church is located or the court in which such action or suit was brought shall determine upon application that, despite the adjudication of liability but in view of all the circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses which the court of common pleas or such other court shall deem proper.

3. The indemnification and advancement of expense provided by, or punted to, this Article XII shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification or advancement of expenses may be entitled under any Bylaw, agreement, vote of disinterested Elders or otherwise, both as to action in his/her official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office. It is the policy of the Church that indemnification of, and advancement of expenses to, Elders, Deacons, and officers of the Church shall be made to the fullest extent permitted by law. To this end, the provisions of this Article XII shall be deemed to have been amended for the benefit of Elders, Deacons, and officers of the Church effective immediately upon any modification of the Pennsylvania Nonprofit Corporation Law of 1988 ("NPCL") or any modification, or adoption of any other law that expands or enlarges the power or obligation of corporations organized under the NPCL to indemnify, or advance expenses to, Elders, Deacons, and officers of the corporations.
4. The Church shall pay expenses incurred by an officer, Deacon or Elder, and may pay expenses incurred by any other employee or agent, in

defending an action, or proceeding referred to in this Article XII in advance of the final disposition of such action or proceeding upon receipt of any undertaking by or on behalf of such person to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined that he/she is not entitled to be indemnified by the Church.

5. The indemnification and advancement of expense provided by, or granted pursuant to, this Article XII shall, unless otherwise provided when authorized or ratified, continue as to a person who has ceased to be an Elder, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of the Church and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such person.
6. The Church shall have the authority to create a fund of any nature, which may, but need not be, under the control of a trustee, or otherwise secure or insure in any manner, its indemnification obligations, whether arising under these Bylaw or otherwise. This authority shall include, without limitation, the authority to: (i) deposit funds in trust or in escrow; (ii) establish any form of self-insurance; (iii) secure its indemnity obligation by grant of a security interest, mortgage or other lien on the assets of the Church; or (iv) establish a letter of credit, guaranty or surety arrangement for the benefit of such persons in connection with the anticipated indemnification or advancement of expenses contemplated by this Article XII. The provisions of this Article XII shall be not deemed to preclude the indemnification of, or advancement of expenses to, any person who is not specified in Section 1. or Section 2. of this Article XII but whom the Church has the power or obligation to indemnify, or to advance expenses for, under the provisions of the NPCL or otherwise. The authority granted by this Section XII.6 shall be exercised by the Board of Elders of the Church.
7. The Church shall have the authority to enter into a separate indemnification agreement with any officer, Deacon, Elder, employee or agent of the Church or any subsidiary providing for such indemnification of such person as the Board of Elders shall determine up to the fullest extent permitted by law.
8. As soon as practicable after receipt by any person specified in Section 1. or Section of this Article XII of notice of the commencement of any action, suit or proceeding specified in Section 1. or Section 2. of this Article XII, such person shall, if a claim with respect thereto may be

made against the Church under Article XII of these By-laws, notify the Church in writing of the commencement or threat thereof; however, the omission so to notify the Church shall not relieve the Church from any liability under Article XII of these Bylaws unless the Church shall have been prejudiced thereby or from any other liability which it may have to such person other than under Article XII of these Bylaws. With respect to any such action as to which such person notifies the Church of the commencement or threat thereof, the Church may participate therein at its own expense and, except as otherwise provided herein, to the extent that it desires, the Church, jointly with any other indemnifying party similarly notified, shall be entitled to assume the defense thereof, with counsel selected by the Church. After notice from the Church to such person of its election to assume the defense thereof, the Church shall not be liable to such person under Article XII of these Bylaws for any legal or other expenses subsequently incurred by such person in connection with the defense thereof other than as otherwise provided herein. Such person shall have the right to employ his own counsel in such action, but the fees and expenses of such counsel incurred after notice from the Church of its assumption of the defense thereof shall be at the expense of such person unless: (i) the employment of counsel by such person shall have been authorized by the Church; (ii) such person shall have reasonably concluded that there may be a conflict of interest between the Church and such person in the conduct of the defense of such proceeding; or (iii) the Church shall not in fact have employed counsel to assume the defense of such action. The Church shall not be entitled to assume the defense of any proceeding brought by or on behalf of the Church or as to which such person shall have reasonably concluded that there may be a conflict of interest. If indemnification under Article XII of these Bylaws or advancement of expenses are not paid or made by the Church, or on its behalf, within 90 days after a written claim for indemnification or a request for advancement of expenses has been received by the Church, such person may, at any time thereafter, bring suit against the Church to recover the unpaid amount of the claim or the advancement of expenses. The right to indemnification and advancements of expenses provided hereunder shall be enforceable by such person in any court of competent jurisdiction. The burden of proving that indemnification is not appropriate shall be on the Church. Expenses reasonably incurred by such person in connection with successfully establishing the right to indemnification or advancement of expenses, in whole or in part, shall also be indemnified by the Church.

9. The Church shall have the power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was a Elder, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of the Church, or is or was serving at the request of the Church as a Elder, Deacon, officer, employee or agent of another domestic or foreign corporation for profit or not-for-profit, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the Church would have the power to indemnify him against such liability under the provisions of this Article XII.

### **Article XIII Miscellaneous**

1. The Board of Elders may select one or more elder(s)-emeritus with the right to attend all regular and special meetings thereof, but with no power to make motions or to vote and who shall not be counted in determining a quorum.
2. The Church believes that marriage is the joining together of one man and one woman in a covenant union instituted and ordained by God. Furthermore, God's Word declares that the expression of sexual relations is authorized only in the union of male and female within the bond of marriage. Scripture plainly teaches that homosexual lust and practice are sinful in God's sight. Finally, God, in His wisdom, has created each person with a unique design as He wills. We believe that the gender of a person is determined by God and should not be changed or modified after birth.

Based on these statements, the following will apply to all marriages being performed by pastors/officiants at the Church and to the use of its facilities:

- A. Pastors/officiants will only perform a marriage at the Church between a man and woman as described above who believe and follow the Scriptures found in the Holy Bible and at least one of them is a Member of the Church or he/she is the child of a Member of the Church and he/she agrees with the BFC Faith & Order and the Holy Scriptures.

- B. The Church's facilities will only be allowed to be used by the couple being married if at least one of them is a Member of the Church or one of them is the child of a member of the Church and the pastor/officiant performing the ceremony is a believer and agrees with the BFC Faith & Order and the Holy Scriptures. All final decisions about the use of the church facilities are the responsibility of the Elders.
3. The Church operates in compliance with the Whistle Blower Policy found in the Church's Policy Manual.
  4. The Church operates in compliance with Gift Acceptance Policy found in the Church's Policy Manual.
  5. The Church operates in compliance with the Conflict of Interest Policy found in the Church's Policy Manual.
  6. The Church operates in compliance with the Child Protection Policy found in the Church's Policy Manual.

# **Purpose and Vision of Grace BFC**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford in March 2009 ~*

## **Purpose Statement**

Our purpose is to honor God by:

- Worshiping him
- Strengthening believers
- Sharing the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ

## **Vision Statement**

Our vision is to be a church that honors God in everything we do. We will share the saving message of Christ with others, introduce them to a personal relationship with Him, and equip and encourage them to continue the good work that He has begun. Directed by the Holy Spirit, we will do this by:

### **Worshiping Him...**

Publicly - God is holy and worthy to be praised. We will gather together as God's people to focus our worship on Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Privately – God has called us to worship Him with our lives. We will encourage families and individuals to set aside time for regular worship which includes Bible reading and prayer.

### **Strengthening believers...**

Promoting fellowship with one another - God has given us the privilege and responsibility to fellowship with one another through His Son, Jesus Christ. We will regularly gather together to encourage each other to greater service to God and to man. We will serve God and His family by sharing our abilities, spiritual gifts and talents.

Building disciples - God has commanded us to strengthen one another's faith. We will encourage, support and challenge each other in our relationship with God by preaching and teaching His word and by emphasizing the need to be like Christ.

### **Sharing the Good News of our Lord Jesus Christ...**

Sharing Christ with others - God has called us to make disciples of all the nations. We will share the saving message of Christ with our community, our nation, and our world.

Extending Christ's Kingdom - God has not only called us to declare the gospel but also to demonstrate it by showing the love of Christ through our relationships and activity. We will extend the reign of Christ by being agents of His mercy and compassion wherever we are.



## **Whistleblower Protection Policy**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on March 19, 2019 ~*

Grace Bible Fellowship Church (Grace BFC) is committed to being 'above reproach' in all of its operations and functions in accordance with good governance policies and procedures. Our church will operate in compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, including those concerning accounting and auditing, and we prohibit all fraudulent practices by any of our board members, officers, employees, or volunteers. This policy outlines a procedure for employees to report actions that an employee reasonably believes violates a law, or regulation or that constitutes fraudulent accounting or other practices. This policy applies to any matter which is related to the Church's business and does not relate to private acts of an individual not connected to the business of the Church.

If an employee has a reasonable belief that an employee or representative of Grace Bible Fellowship Church has engaged in any action that violates any applicable law, or regulation, including those concerning accounting and auditing, or constitutes a fraudulent practice, the employee is expected to immediately report such information to the Sr. Pastor. If the employee does not feel comfortable reporting the information to the Sr. Pastor, he or she is expected to report the information to the Delegate to the BFC Conference.

All reports will be followed up promptly, and an investigation conducted. In conducting its investigations, Grace BFC will strive to keep the identity of the complaining individual as confidential as possible, while conducting an adequate review and investigation.

Grace BFC will not retaliate against an employee in the terms and conditions of employment because that employee: (a) reports to a supervisor, a Pastor, the Delegate or other member of the Board of Elders, or to a federal, state or local agency what the employee believes in good faith to be a violation of the law; or (b) participates in good faith in any resulting investigation or proceeding, or (c) exercises his or her rights under any state or federal law(s) or regulation(s) to pursue a claim or take legal action to protect the employee's rights.

Grace BFC may take disciplinary action (up to and including termination) against an employee who, in the Board of Elder's assessment, has engaged in retaliatory conduct in violation of this policy.

In addition, Grace BFC will not, with the intent to retaliate, take any action harmful to any employee who has provided to law enforcement personnel or a court truthful information

relating to the commission or possible commission by the Church or any of its employees of a violation of any applicable law or regulation.

Pastors and Delegates will be trained on this policy and Grace BFC's prohibition against retaliation in accordance with this policy.

## **Gift Acceptance Policy**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on March 19, 2019 ~*

The main purpose of a gift acceptance policy is to assist Grace Bible Fellowship Church (Grace BFC) in evaluating potential gifts in order to protect Grace BFC from “problem” gifts (gifts that expose the organization to risk or are inconsistent with our stated mission, core programs, as well as special projects) and to provide guidance for the acceptance of any gift within the current framework of a non-profit organization.

Acceptance of any contribution, gift or grant is at the discretion of Board of Elders of Grace BFC. Grace BFC will not accept any gift unless it can be used or expended consistently with the purpose and mission, including special projects, of the church.

No irrevocable gift, whether outright or life-income in character, will be accepted if under any reasonable set of circumstances the gift would jeopardize the donor’s financial security.

Grace BFC will refrain from providing advice about the tax or other treatment of gifts and will encourage donors to seek guidance from their own professional advisors.

Grace BFC will accept donations of cash or publicly traded securities. Gifts of in-kind services will be accepted at the discretion of the Board of Elders of Grace BFC.

Certain other gifts, real property, personal property, in-kind gifts, non-liquid securities, and contributions whose sources are not transparent or whose use is restricted in some manner, must be reviewed by the Finance Committee of Grace BFC prior to acceptance due to the special obligations raised or liabilities they may pose for Grace BFC.

Grace BFC will provide acknowledgments to donors meeting IRS substantiation requirements for property received by Grace BFC as a gift. However, except for gifts of cash and publicly traded securities, no value shall be ascribed to any receipt or other form of substantiation of a gift received by Grace BFC.

Grace BFC will respect the intent of the donor relating to gifts for restricted purposes and those relating to the desire to remain anonymous. With respect to anonymous gifts, Grace BFC will restrict information about the donor to only those staff members and/or Elders with a need to know.

Grace BFC will not compensate, whether through commissions, finders' fees, or other means, any third party for directing a gift or a donor to Grace BFC.

# **Conflicts of Interest Policy**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on March 19, 2019 ~*

## **1. Reason for Policy**

As a ministry initiated and sustained by God, Grace Bible Fellowship Church (Grace BFC) has a mandate to conduct all of its affairs decently and above reproach both in the sight of God and man. That accountability includes a commitment to operate with the highest level of integrity and to avoid conflicts of interest.

As a nonprofit, tax-exempt entity, Grace BFC depends on charitable contributions from the public. Maintenance of its tax-exempt status is important both for its continued financial stability and for the receipt of contributions and public support. Therefore, the IRS and state corporate and tax officials view the operations of the Church as a public trust, accountable to both governmental authorities and members of the public.

Among Grace BFC and its Elder Board and other employees, there exists a fiduciary duty, which carries with it a broad and unbending duty of loyalty. The Board and employees are responsible for administering the affairs of the Church honestly and prudently, and for exercising their best care, skill, and judgment for the sole benefit of the Church. Those persons shall exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions involved in their duties, and they shall not use their positions with the Church or knowledge gained there from for their personal benefit. The interests of Grace BFC must have the first priority, and all purchases of goods and services must be affected on a basis that secures for the Church full competitive advantages as to product, service, and price.

## **2. Persons Concerned**

This statement is directed to Elder Board members as well as those employees and volunteers designated by the Board who influence the actions of the Church or its Board, or make commitments on their behalf. For example, this would include all who make purchasing decisions, all other persons who might be described as “staff” (both full-time and part-time), and all who have proprietary information concerning the Church.

### **3. Areas in Which Conflicts May Arise**

Conflicts of interest may arise in the relations of Elders and employees with any of the following third parties:

- 3.1 Persons or entities supplying goods and services to Grace BFC.
- 3.2 Persons or entities from which the Church leases property and equipment.
- 3.3 Persons or entities with whom the Church is dealing or planning to deal in connection with the gift, purchase, or sale of real estate, securities, or other property.
- 3.4 Other ministries or nonprofit organizations that affect the operations of the Church.
- 3.5 Donors and others supporting Grace BFC.

### **4. Nature of Conflicting Interest**

A material conflicting interest may be defined as an interest, direct or indirect, between any person or entity mentioned in Section 3, and an Elder, employee, or volunteer which might affect, or might reasonably be thought by others to affect, the judgment or conduct of a Elder or employee of Grace BFC. Such an interest might arise through:

- . 4.1 Owning stock or holding debt or other proprietary interests in any third party dealing with the Church.
- . 4.2 Holding office, serving on the Board, participating in management, or being otherwise employed (or formerly employed) in any third party dealing with the Church.
- . 4.3 Receiving remuneration for services with respect to individual transactions involving the Church.
- . 4.4 Using the Church's personnel, equipment, supplies, or goodwill for other than Church-approved activities, programs, and purposes.
- . 4.5 Receiving personal gifts or loans from third parties dealing with Grace BFC. (Receipt of any gift is disapproved except gifts of nominal value, which could not be refused without discourtesy. No personal gift of money should ever be accepted.)

- . 4.6 Obtaining an interest in real estate, securities, or other property that the Church might consider buying or leasing.
- . 4.7 Expending staff time during the Church's normal business hours for personal affairs to the detriment of work performance for Grace BFC.

## **5. Indirect Interests**

As noted above, conflicting interests may be indirect. An Elder or employee will be considered to have an indirect interest in another entity or transaction if any of the following also have an interest:

- . 5.1 A family member of a Elder or employee. (Family member is defined for these purposes as all persons related by blood or marriage.)
- . 5.2 An estate or trust of which the Elder or employee or member of his family is a beneficiary, personal representative, or trustee.
- . 5.3 A company of which a member of the family of the Elder or employee is an officer, director, or employee, or in which he has ownership or other proprietary interests.

## **6. Interpretation of This Policy**

The areas of conflicting interest listed above and the relations in those areas which may give rise to conflict, are not exhaustive. Conceivably, conflicts might arise in other areas or through other relations. It is assumed that the Elders and employees will recognize such areas and relation by analogy.

The fact that one of the interests described in Section 4 exists does not necessarily mean that a conflict exists, or that the conflict, if it exists, is material enough to be of practical importance, or if material, that upon full disclosure of all relevant facts and circumstances that it is necessarily adverse to the interests of the Church. However, it is the policy of the Board that the existence of any of the interests described in Section 4 shall be disclosed before any transaction is consummated. It shall be the continuing responsibility of Elders and employees to scrutinize their transactions with outside business interests and relationships for potential conflicts and to immediately make such disclosures.

Disclosure should be made to the Chairman of the Elder Board (or if he is the one with the conflict, then to the Sr. Pastor), who shall bring these matters to the attention of the Elder Board. The Board shall then determine whether a conflict exists and is material, and in the presence of an existing material conflict, whether the contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable as to the Church. The decisions on these matters are the sole discretion of the Board. The Board's first concern must be the welfare of the Church and the advancement of its purposes.



# **Investment Policy**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on July 19, 2016 ~*

## **I. Overview**

The purpose of this Investment Policy Statement (“Statement”) is to establish a clear understanding between Grace Bible Fellowship Church (Grace BFC) and all investment managers(s), advisor(s) without discretion (brokers), banker(s), investment broker(s), financial planner(s), and all other financial advisor(s) involved in the direction of Grace BFC’s investment assets (hereinafter referred to as “Investment Manager(s)”).

In order to attain the desired Investment Objectives referenced in Section II, Grace BFC may choose more than one Investment Manager of varying styles and philosophies to manage Grace BFC’s assets. These Investment Manager(s) will invest the assigned assets in accordance with this Statement, objectives, and restrictions. Funds shall be invested with care, skill, prudence, and diligence. Grace BFC reserves the right to prepare separate addenda or directives specific to one Investment Manager, which would not apply to all.

These objectives and guidelines are intended to provide meaningful guidance in the management of Grace BFC’s investment assets and yet not be overly restrictive given changing economic, business, and investment market conditions.

The “Finance Committee” referred to herein is the Grace BFC Finance Committee.

## **II. Investment Objectives**

Grace BFC seeks to manage risk, forfeiting higher yields for safety. Grace BFC’s assets are to be invested in a balanced portfolio composed of equity, fixed income, and cash equivalent securities as well as other investments as Grace BFC deems appropriate. As such, the portfolio is intended to be more aggressive than short to intermediate fixed income oriented portfolios and less aggressive than equity only oriented portfolios. Investment funds shall be so diversified as to minimize the risk of loss. Investment Managers are to make reasonable efforts to control risk, and will be evaluated regularly to ensure that the risk assumed is in accordance with this Statement and its objectives, as well as the given investment style of the Investment Manager.

## **III. Investment Policy**

The following restrictions apply to the investment of Grace BFC’s investment assets:

1. Borrowing of funds or securities is not permitted
2. Funds may not be invested, nor obligations incurred in futures, options, swaps, forwards, Collateralized Mortgage Obligations, or any other financial derivatives.

3. Funds may be invested in non-U.S. securities as long as the company is a mid-cap or large-cap firm.
4. Gifts of tangible personal property such as jewelry, gold, and gems shall not be held as investments, but converted to acceptable forms of investments as soon as practicable.
5. Gifts of non-income producing real estate shall be evaluated by the Finance Committee and Elders as to their suitability for retention.
6. All securities shall be readily marketable, and fixed income securities shall be of investment grade (BBB or better).
7. No specific restriction is placed on portfolio turnover, though the portfolio should not be managed for short-term gains or generation of fees.
8. Securities of companies whose primary business is gambling, alcohol or tobacco should be avoided. Grace BFC does, however, recognize that mutual funds may hold positions in such companies. At the discretion of the Finance Committee Grace BFC may divest of such funds.
9. The Finance Committee may further restrict security selection based on ethical investing criteria on its own or as directed by the Elders of Grace BFC.
10. Investment expenses will be evaluated regularly by the Finance Committee; in no case will fees exceed two percent (2%) of net assets annually.
11. The Elders of Grace BFC, at their sole discretion, may direct the Treasurer to liquidate the investment accounts at any time.
12. The Treasurer will make an annual report to the Elders of Grace BFC on the status of the investment accounts.

#### **IV. Review and Communication**

The Investment Manager(s) is responsible for timely and regular reports, and shall be expected to prepare a quarterly report (on a calendar year basis) for review by the Finance Committee. The report should summarize the Funds' performance and transactions occurring during the period. It is anticipated the Investment Manager will be available to meet with the Finance Committee at least annually to review the performance of the account, unless otherwise directed. The Investment Manager is responsible for communicating to the Finance Committee all significant matters pertaining to the investment of the Church's assets. Any substantive change in investment strategy, asset mix, and other matters affecting the investments, shall be communicated to the Finance Committee in writing for approval prior to the enactment of the strategy. Any significant changes in the structure and financial condition of the Investment Management organization, including changing investment professionals within the Investment Management organization or those assigned to this account should be communicated to the Finance Committee within thirty (30) days.

## **V. Decision Making Authority**

Buying securities or rebalancing the portfolio is the responsibility of the Finance Committee; the Treasurer may sell any security, moving those funds to cash equivalents at any time, reporting such transactions to the Finance Committee.

## **VI. Review of Endowment Policy**

This statement of Investment Policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Finance Committee. Significant revisions will be confirmed as appropriate by the Elders.

## **VI. Termination**

The Elders and Finance Committee reserve the right to terminate their relationship with any Investment Manager or advisor, with or without cause, upon 30 days written advice, provided, that the Investment Manager will be entitled to its earned fees as detailed in the written agreement between the parties.

# Role of the Elder

~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on August 15, 2009 ~

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to identify traits of an elder for a man who feels he is being led to become an elder at Grace BFC. It identifies the way a man should act, think and behave and his attitude in all things that he does. It also identifies responsibilities and duties of an elder at Grace BFC. In doing this it also sets expectations of the congregation so they know what an elder should be doing.

The attitudes and motivations of an elder are as important as the actions and results of his ministry. God calls men to serve:

- Willingly with joy because God desires it (Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:2, 1 Timothy 3:1)
- Humbly with submission because God loves it (1 Peter 5:5)
- Peaceably with love because God shows it (Ephesians 5:25)
- Sensitively with wisdom because God expects it (Acts 20:28)
- Faithfully with patience because God seeks it (2 Timothy 2:2)
- Prayerfully with faith because God teaches it (Ephesians 1:16)
- Carefully with discipline because God counsels it (1 Timothy 4:15-16)

The seven shepherding tasks listed below are those the Bible specifically links to the role of pastor/elder/shepherd. The ultimate goal for an elder is to make disciples for Christ. To this end we are to be witnessing, teaching, encouraging, and baptizing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

• **Guard** – It is the responsibility of an elder to be on guard for his own spiritual well-being and to shepherd the flock, the Church of God, that the Holy Spirit has entrusted to him. Spiritual feeding and protection will involve ensuring that the congregation understands truth and is able to discern error. At times it will require confronting those who promote falsehood and those who live lives contrary to the Word of God. The elder will earnestly pray for himself and the spiritual development of the flock.

(Acts 20:28; Matthew 18:15-17; Luke. 17:3; Acts 15; I Corinthians. 5; Eph. 4:14-15; I Timothy 1:18-20; Hebrews 13:7, 17)

• **Oversee** – It is the responsibility of the elders to oversee the local congregation. This oversight includes, but is not limited to, providing clear vision and direction for the church; making decisions that affect the entire congregation; administering and coordinating the programs of the church; and overseeing the financial matters of the church.

(1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter 5:2)

• **Disciple** – The word disciple includes the meaning of such words as train, admonish and teach. The shepherd is commissioned to reproduce himself in the lives of others, and to be constantly thinking about producing additional leaders. Any contact the elder has with people, should be viewed as an opportunity to build a disciple.

(1 Thessalonians 5:12; 2 Timothy 2:2.)

• **Teach** – Essential to the role of shepherding God's people is the ministry of teaching. A constant refrain of the New Testament is to engage the mind: love the Lord with "all your mind," be transformed "by the renewing of your mind," "set your minds on things above," and "prepare your minds for action." The shepherd must be able to teach sound doctrine consistently and to refute those who might contradict, lest any be led astray. "The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

(Matthew 22:37, Mark 12:30, Romans 12:2, 2 Timothy 2:2, 1 Timothy 5:17, Ephesians 4:11-13, Colossians 3:1-2, 1 Peter 1:13)

• **Evangelize** – The Apostle Paul's exhortation to Timothy is very instructive to us. The elder is to be purposefully involved in sharing the Gospel with unbelievers and equipping the church to also share the Gospel (Equipping means to model, provide opportunities and / or training). Elders are not required to be gifted in evangelism, but are required to be 'doing the work of' evangelism.

(2 Timothy 4:2, 5; Romans 1:14-16)

• **Pray** – Prayer is to be of the first order of importance for elders as demonstrated by the deacons being selected specifically to free the Apostles to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the word. Jesus set the example when He prayed for himself, the disciples and for all believers. He promises that the disciples will be able to do what He has been doing if they "ask in my name." Believers who are sick are told to request elders to pray for them.

(Acts 6:4, John 5:13-16, John 14:12-14, John 17)

• **Serve** – We are told as shepherds that we should be willing and eager to serve those entrusted to us, not lording it over them but setting an example for the flock. Jesus tells us that to be truly great leaders, we must become servants to those we oversee when we exercise our authority. We should be faithful and use the gifts that God has given us to serve others out of love. This will take many forms including serving in ministry alongside others, disciplining, encouraging, and praying for those in our congregation who are physically, emotionally or spiritually ill, helping in times of need, as well as sharing in their sufferings.

(1 Peter 5: 2-3, Matthew 20: 25-28, 1 Peter 4:10, Galatians 5:13, James 5:13-16)

## Vacation Policy

*~ Revised and Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on March 19, 2019 ~*

- Senior Pastor, service years 1 – 14:  
3 weeks PAID vacation, plus one (1) PAID week of approved off-site ministry each year.
- Senior Pastor, service years 15+:  
4 weeks of PAID vacation, plus one (1) PAID week of approved off-site ministry each year.
- All other salaried positions, service years 1 – 4:  
2 weeks PAID vacation, plus one (1) PAID week of approved off-site ministry each year.
- All other salaried positions, service years 5 – 14:  
3 weeks PAID vacation, plus one (1) PAID week of approved off-site ministry each year.
- All other salaried positions, service years 15+:  
4 weeks PAID vacation, plus one (1) PAID week of approved off-site ministry each year.
- All part-time employees:  
Twenty-four (24) hours of vacation time will be earned each calendar year if he/she works an average of eight (8) hours per week or more.
- Other Guidelines
  - It is encouraged that all vacation days be used within the calendar year that they are earned. However, up to 5 vacation days can be rolled over upon elder board approval.
  - Must use off-site ministry week within the calendar year earned- no rollover
  - For pastor positions, service outside of Grace BFC Wallingford, but within the BFC denomination will be considered when calculating years of service
  - For pastor positions, service outside of the BFC will be considered on a case by case basis when calculating years of service

## Membership Related Policies of Grace BFC

~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on December 18, 2018 ~

### Coming Under Care of Grace BFC

**Under Care** – A person is considered to be “Under the Care of Grace BFC” when they have been assigned either an Elder, Host Team Member, or other Elder approved member of Grace that they are connected with for the purposes of personal and spiritual care, including walking with them as they connect to Grace. When a person is initially connected with someone to care for them, the office shall record the date and the person assigned to them. That “coming under care” date will be used for any waiting periods required for service in children’s ministry. ~ *from Child Protection Policy, Aug. 21 2018*

**Implementation Note:** *people typically come Under Care of Grace when a Host Team member follows up with a Sunday morning visitor who shows an interest in returning, when a small group or other ministry team leader determines that a person is becoming a regular part of their ministry, or when a Pastor or Elder believes a person has an interest in learning more about the church and how they might connect. In all cases, the leader who determines a person has an interest in connecting to Grace should contact the church office to provide basic contact information so the person can be listed in the church database as under care and can be appropriately followed up on*

### Becoming a Member of Grace BFC

**Membership** – Grace BFC, as a part of the Bible Fellowship Church, uses the definition and qualifications for membership as defined in the BFC in the book of Church Order (2016 edition):

#### 202-3 Qualifications and Duties of Church Membership

202-3.1 Qualifications. Anyone desiring to be a member of the BFC shall give testimony and evidence of faith in Christ and the new birth. He shall be in sympathy with the Faith & Order, be baptized by immersion subsequent to salvation, and manifest holiness toward God and separation from the world (Acts 2:41-47).

202-3.2 Duties. Commitment to Christ and the BFC shall be manifested by the joyful acceptance of the following responsibilities:

- (1) To live in keeping with the doctrines and standards of the Church as found in the F&O (John 17:15-17; 1Cor.5:6-11; 6:14-18; Eph.5:26,27; Titus 3:10; James 1:26,27; 2Jo.9,10)
- (2) To exercise willingly one’s spiritual gifts within the body (Eph.4:11-16; 1Cor.12:4-31; Rom.12:3-8)
- (3) To minister under the direction of the Church (Acts 20:28; Heb.13:7; 1Pe.5:2,3; 1Tim.3:1; 5:17)
- (4) To bear the message of the Church to the outside world (Mat.28:19,20; Acts 1:8; Mat.5:13-16)
- (5) To pray daily for the elders and the ministries of the Church (Rom.10:1; Mat.9:38; Acts 4:29; Eph.6:18,19; Acts 13:2-4)
- (6) To support the program of the Church financially with the regular giving of tithes and offerings (Mal.3:10; 1Cor.9:13,14; 16:1,2; 2Cor.8:7-9; 9:6,7)

- (7) To submit to those God has ordained as rulers in the Church (Heb.13:17; cf. also references under #3 above)
- (8) To attend faithfully the stated meetings of the Church (Acts 2:42; Heb.10:25)
- (9) To observe the Lord's Supper (1Cor.11:23-28)
- (10) To demonstrate mutual care and concern for the other members of the Church (John 13:34,35; 15:12,17; Gal.6:1,2,10; James 5:9,16)

**Grace BFC Expectations Associated with Membership** – in 2013 the Elders produced a 3 page document on expectations of Members which is included as **Appendix A**

**Implementation Note:** *people typically attend a 6-8 session Membership and Baptism class led by the Senior Pastor prior to being Baptized or received as a Membership. In some cases, especially with the teenagers, these might be reduced to a shorter series of classes focusing on Baptism and leading to Baptism apart from membership. In special cases the classes may be replaced by meetings with one of the pastoral staff. In all cases those desiring to be baptized or to be received as members must be interviewed and approved by the Board of Elders.*

**Additional Motions of the Elders Related to Membership** (May, 15, 2018):

Resolved: That we change our baptism and membership screening process to include a quorum of elders during the screening.

Resolved: That we select a minimum of two elders to participate in any membership class offered in order to become acquainted with the potential applicants before we meet with them for membership screening.

Resolved: That we confer with parents or guardians and teen leaders when considering teens for baptism and/or membership.

## **Note on Baptism, Child Dedication, Weddings and Funerals at Grace BFC**

**Official Motions of the Board of Elders:** The following was approved by the Elders on January 17, 2017:

**Resolved** that the elders are required to officially approve and record in their minutes all those being added to or removed from membership, including the type of reception or termination, as well as all those being baptized, married or presenting their children for dedication within the ministry of Grace BFC.

**Record Keeping:** On January 17, 2017 the Elders enacted a list of requirements for Record Keeping that is attached here as **Appendix B**

**Weddings in the Church:** On August 22, 2015 the Elders approved the policy below entitled "FOR USE OF THE GRACE BFC (GBFC) OF WALLINGFORD CHURCH FACILITY FOR MARRIAGE"

The church facilities may only be used by a couple being married if at least one of them is a member of GBFC of Wallingford or he/she is the child of a member of GBFC of Wallingford. In all cases, both must be in agreement with the BFC Faith & Order and the Holy Scriptures. The pastor/officiant performing the ceremony must be a believer who is in agreement with Article 103-3 and Article 154 of the BFC Faith & Order..

All final decisions about the use of the church properties are the responsibility of the Elders.



## **Ending Membership at Grace BFC**

People may be removed from Membership any time at the request of the Member or of the Board of Elders. In all cases the Board of Elders shall approve of the change of Membership status. Where possible the Elders will communicate that change to the person and request an exit interview. A Member may be removed in the following ways:

1. Withdrawn – The Member may request in writing to any Elder that they be withdrawn from membership
2. Transferred – The Member may request in writing to any Elder that their membership be transferred to another Bible-believing Christian church
3. Deceased – Upon learning of the death of a Member the Elders shall remove them from membership effective on the date of their death
4. Dropped – When it is determined that a member is attending another Bible-believing Christian church, any Elder can reach out to them to see if they want to transfer or withdraw their membership, and if the Elder receives no response within 30 days, they can bring their name to the Elders to be dropped from Membership
5. Removed – If a Member is placed under discipline by the Elders they may reach a place where Biblically they should be removed from the Church, at such a time the Elders will remove the person from membership and mark that they were Removed Under Discipline

*Above adopted by the Elders on December 18, 2018*

## **Appendix A: Expectations associated with Membership**

**Membership carries the expectation that those who are members will make confession of faith in Jesus Christ and be like-minded in their understanding of God's word.**

- A member must confess that Jesus is Savior and Lord. "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:10) Belief is a matter of the heart and only the believer and God know what is in the heart. What is in the heart is known only to the believer and God. Yet God makes it clear that what is in the heart will be confessed from the mouth. Those who become members should formally and publicly profess their trust in what Christ has done, express their assurance of acceptance by God because of Him, and their submission to Him as lord.
- A member must be baptized. Baptism is not necessary for salvation but is a public identification with Christ. Baptism is a step of obedience and a profession of a person's desire to obey Christ and follow Him.
- A member must share the convictions of our church concerning what God desires for members. While doctrinal differences are a sad fact of church history and a reality among churches today, a shared doctrinal conviction draws us together in a common understanding of what God has done and is doing. We cannot be united as members of one body if we are divided on our understanding of the essentials of what God's word teaches. Members will be expected to be in sympathy with the doctrinal convictions expressed in the Articles of Faith of the Bible Fellowship Church.
- A member must accept the evangelistic task of our church, to confess Christ as Savior to our world, our nation and our community. We must be willing to be clear and firm in sharing the truth of the Gospel even when such proclamation may bring condemnation to us as individuals and as a church.

## **Membership is an attitude formed by commitment and submission.**

- The word of God makes it clear that the children of God are to live out the new life as a part of the family of God. We are "all members of one body" (Ephesians 4:25). We were all "baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). We are not to "give up meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25).
- While we become members of God's universal church when we are born again through faith in Jesus Christ, God calls us to be committed and submitted to a local church which gathers for hearing God's word, enjoying fellowship, celebrating our Christ-won redemption, and praying together.
- The decision to belong to a local assembly of believers is made by individual believers or their family. The decision to join a part of God's family is a significant one and should be made prayerfully and deliberately. Any decision to break the bond of membership is a serious matter and should be considered only in consultation with the elders.
- The decision to be a member is expressed in commitment. Commitment is the desire to take one's place among the family of God which forms the assembly. Commitment accepts responsibility to participate in the ministry of the church and adopts the biblical vision of that church. Commitment shares the concerns of and for brothers and sisters in Christ who have themselves made the commitment to belong. Commitment makes God given spiritual gifts available for ministry. Commitment understands the significance of strong and healthy relationships between brothers and sisters in God's family.
- The decision to be a member is expressed in submission. Submission is recognizing and embracing the will of another. Membership is submission first to the will God and the teaching of His word. Membership is secondly submission to those whom God has appointed as leaders and spiritual care givers in the local church. Membership is also submission to other members whose needs and desires are given priority over the individual member's needs and desires.
- Those who become members understand that shared commitment and submission create a special bond between the followers of Jesus. That bond creates a family in which individual members know they are accepted and supported. That bond creates an understanding in which individual members know they have responsibility to others who are part of that family.

**Membership carries the expectation to glorify Jesus Christ with our lives. We are not perfect, nor will we ever become perfect until we meet Jesus Christ face to face. However, members should be ever maturing in Christ, surrendering more through growth in faith, and more clearly understanding the richness and fullness of God's abounding grace.**

- As God enables, members will worship the Lord with other believers by engaging in public worship and by observing the Lord's Supper.
- Members will pursue holiness by personally spending time with God. This includes reading the Bible to develop a deeper understanding of God's word; spending regular time in prayer, confessing our sin, seeking his wisdom, and asking for his direction in our lives, as well as the lives of others.
- As God enables, members will participate in the fellowship and the community of our local assembly of believers. Members will seek to discern their role within the local fellowship of believers, and step out in faith to be used by God as they invest their talents to the glory of God and the benefit of all.
- Members will model the importance of community to younger generations.
- Members will support the local fellowship of believers by actively praying. Members recognize that all they have comes from God, including the right to petition God through prayer for others
- Members will support the local fellowship of believers by systematic giving of their income. Members recognize that all they have comes from God, including the privilege to generously give back to God through tithing to the benefit of the local church, as well as the church universal. Members are encouraged to give above and beyond their tithe as God directs and blesses.

#### **Membership Blessings:**

**Those who become members enjoy the following benefits and blessings:**

- Members receive the spiritual care of elders.
- Members are supported through being held accountable.
- Members participate in decisions of the congregation.
- Members are part of a family network bound together by a publicly expressed commitment.

## Appendix B - Elders Motions Regarding Official Records – January 17, 2017

**Whereas** it is important for legal, denominational and historical reasons to keep and make accessible key records for the church, therefore be it

**Resolved** that the Church Office keep up to date, permanent, printed records of the following:

- All those joining in Membership at Grace BFC, including name, date, senior pastor and type of reception (new member or transfer member)
- All those ending their Membership at Grace BFC, including name, date, senior pastor and type of termination (withdrawn, transferred, deceased, dropped, removed\*)  
*\*note: terminology updated Dec. 5, 2018 to match policy on ending membership*
- All those baptized within the ministry of Grace BFC, including name, date, place of baptism, officiant
- All those being married within the ministry of Grace BFC, including name Bride and Groom, date, place of wedding, officiant
- All those dedicating children within the ministry of Grace BFC, including name of child being dedication, name of those dedicating the child, date, place of dedication, officiant
- All those who are members or attendees to Grace BFC that die, including name of deceased, Grace BFC membership status at the time of death (member, non-member), date of death, burial location, officiant
- Minutes from all officially called congregational meetings, including full text of any approved budgets and yearend financial reports
- Annual elders signature page of agreement with the Bible Fellowship Church Faith and Order

Be it further:

**Resolved** that the Church Office be instructed to keep digital records of all the above beginning in January 1, 2017, as well as keeping digital copies of all elder and deacon minutes and all official church policies. Be it further:

**Resolved** that the elders are required to officially approve and record in their minutes all those being added to or removed from membership, including the type of reception or termination, as well as all those being baptized, married or presenting their children for dedication within the ministry of Grace BFC. Be it further:

**Resolved** that for all areas where elder or congregational approval is needed that the Secretary of the Board of Elders shall be responsible to, and the only person authorized to, instruct the church office to update the records. Be it further:

**Resolved** that in all areas where the elders or congregation are not required to give approval that the Senior Pastor shall be responsible to, and the only person authorized to, instruct the church office to update the records. Be it further:

**Resolved** that the Secretary of the Board of Elders shall forward to the Church Office a digital copy of all approved Board of Elder minutes, final copies of approved Church Policies, ratified Board of Deacon minutes and approved Congregational Meeting Minutes (along with any approved Budgets, Year End Financial Reports or other congregationally approved documents). Be it further:

**Resolved** that all official printed records be kept in record books that are in an accessible place in the Church Office and that they be available for inspection at any time. Be if further:

**Resolved** that in addition to the permanent record book the Church Office maintain at all times an accurate record of current members that can be provided at any time.

## **Expectations Associated with Membership**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on August 23, 2013 ~*

**Membership carries the expectation that those who are members will make confession of faith in Jesus Christ and be like-minded in their understanding of God's word.**

- A member must confess that Jesus is Savior and Lord. "For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved." (Romans 10:10) Belief is a matter of the heart and only the believer and God know what is in the heart. What is in the heart is known only to the believer and God. Yet God makes it clear that what is in the heart will be confessed from the mouth. Those who become members should formally and publicly profess their trust in what Christ has done, express their assurance of acceptance by God because of Him, and their submission to Him as lord.
- A member must be baptized. Baptism is not necessary for salvation but is a public identification with Christ. Baptism is a step of obedience and a profession of a person's desire to obey Christ and follow Him.
- A member must share the convictions of our church concerning what God desires for members. While doctrinal differences are a sad fact of church history and a reality among churches today, a shared doctrinal conviction draws us together in a common understanding of what God has done and is doing. We cannot be united as members of one body if we are divided on our understanding of the essentials of what God's word teaches. Members will be expected to be in sympathy with the doctrinal convictions expressed in the Articles of Faith of the Bible Fellowship Church.
- A member must accept the evangelistic task of our church, to confess Christ as Savior to our world, our nation and our community. We must be willing to be clear and firm in sharing the truth of the Gospel even when such proclamation may bring condemnation to us as individuals and as a church.

## **Membership is an attitude formed by commitment and submission.**

- The word of God makes it clear that the children of God are to live out the new life as a part of the family of God. We are "all members of one body" (Ephesians 4:25). We were all "baptized by one Spirit into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13). We are not to "give up meeting together" (Hebrews 10:25).
- While we become members of God's universal church when we are born again through faith in Jesus Christ, God calls us to be committed and submitted to a local church which gathers for hearing God's word, enjoying fellowship, celebrating our Christ-won redemption, and praying together.
- The decision to belong to a local assembly of believers is made by individual believers or their family. The decision to join a part of God's family is a significant one and should be made prayerfully and deliberately. Any decision to break the bond of membership is a serious matter and should be considered only in consultation with the elders.
- The decision to be a member is expressed in commitment. Commitment is the desire to take one's place among the family of God which forms the assembly. Commitment accepts responsibility to participate in the ministry of the church and adopts the biblical vision of that church. Commitment shares the concerns of and for brothers and sisters in Christ who have themselves made the commitment to belong. Commitment makes God given spiritual gifts available for ministry. Commitment understands the significance of strong and healthy relationships between brothers and sisters in God's family.
- The decision to be a member is expressed in submission. Submission is recognizing and embracing the will of another. Membership is submission first to the will God and the teaching of His word. Membership is secondly submission to those whom God has appointed as leaders and spiritual care givers in the local church. Membership is also submission to other members whose needs and desires are given priority over the individual member's needs and desires.
- Those who become members understand that shared commitment and submission create a special bond between the followers of Jesus. That bond creates a family in which individual members know they are accepted and supported. That bond creates an understanding in which individual members know they have responsibility to others who are part of that family.

**Membership carries the expectation to glorify Jesus Christ with our lives. We are not perfect, nor will we ever become perfect until we meet Jesus Christ face to face. However, members should be ever maturing in Christ, surrendering more through growth in faith, and more clearly understanding the richness and fullness of God's abounding grace.**

- As God enables, members will worship the Lord with other believers by engaging in public worship and by observing the Lord's Supper.
- Members will pursue holiness by personally spending time with God. This includes reading the Bible to develop a deeper understanding of God's word; spending regular time in prayer, confessing our sin, seeking his wisdom, and asking for his direction in our lives, as well as the lives of others.
- As God enables, members will participate in the fellowship and the community of our local assembly of believers. Members will seek to discern their role within the local fellowship of believers, and step out in faith to be used by God as they invest their talents to the glory of God and the benefit of all.
- Members will model the importance of community to younger generations.
- Members will support the local fellowship of believers by actively praying. Members recognize that all they have comes from God, including the right to petition God through prayer for others
- Members will support the local fellowship of believers by systematic giving of their income. Members recognize that all they have comes from God, including the privilege to generously give back to God through tithing to the benefit of the local church, as well as the church universal. Members are encouraged to give above and beyond their tithe as God directs and blesses.

**Membership Blessings:**

**Those who become members enjoy the following benefits and blessings:**

- Members receive the spiritual care of elders.
- Members are supported through being held accountable.
- Members participate in decisions of the congregation.
- Members are part of a family network bound together by a publicly expressed commitment.



## Elder Motions Regarding Official Records

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on January 17, 2017 ~*

**Whereas** it is important for legal, denominational and historical reasons to keep and make accessible key records for the church, therefore be it

**Resolved** that the Church Office keep up to date, permanent, printed records of the following:

- All those joining in Membership at Grace BFC, including name, date, senior pastor and type of reception (new member or transfer member)
- All those ending their Membership at Grace BFC, including name, date, senior pastor and type of termination (transferred, withdrawn, dropped, dismissed, deceased)
- All those baptized within the ministry of Grace BFC, including name, date, place of baptism, officiant
- All those being married within the ministry of Grace BFC, including name Bride and Groom, date, place of wedding, officiant
- All those dedicating children within the ministry of Grace BFC, including name of child being dedication, name of those dedicating the child, date, place of dedication, officiant
- All those who are members or attendees to Grace BFC that die, including name of deceased, Grace BFC membership status at the time of death (member, non-member), date of death, burial location, officiant
- Minutes from all officially called congregational meetings, including full text of any approved budgets and yearend financial reports
- Annual elders signature page of agreement with the Bible Fellowship Church Faith and Order

Be it further:

**Resolved** that the Church Office be instructed to keep digital records of all the above beginning in January 1, 2017, as well as keeping digital copies of all elder and deacon minutes and all official church policies. Be it further:

**Resolved** that the elders are required to officially approve and record in their minutes all those being added to or removed from membership, including the type of reception or termination, as well as all those being baptized, married or presenting their children for dedication within the ministry of Grace BFC. Be it further:

**Resolved** that for all areas where elder or congregational approval is needed that the Secretary of the Board of Elders shall be responsible to, and the only person authorized to, instruct the church office to update the records. Be it further:

**Resolved** that in all areas where the elders or congregation are not required to give approval that the Senior Pastor shall be responsible to, and the only person authorized to, instruct the church office to update the records. Be it further:

**Resolved** that the Secretary of the Board of Elders shall forward to the Church Office a digital copy of all approved Board of Elder minutes, final copies of approved Church Policies, ratified Board of Deacon minutes and approved Congregational Meeting Minutes (along with any approved Budgets, Year End Financial Reports or other congregationally approved documents). Be it further:

**Resolved** that all official printed records be kept in record books that are in an accessible place in the Church Office and that they be available for inspection at any time. Be if further:

**Resolved** that in addition to the permanent record book the Church Office maintain at all times an accurate record of current members that can be provided at any time.

# Grace Bible Fellowship Church

## CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on August 21, 2018 ~

### **CONTENTS**

CONTENTS .....	1
PURPOSE .....	2
SCOPE .....	2
DEFINITIONS.....	2
ADULT WORKER ENLISTMENT .....	3
JUNIOR WORKER ENLISTMENT .....	4
CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORKER APPLICATION FORM .....	4
WORKER AND JUNIOR WORKER TRAINING .....	5
WORKER SUPERVISION .....	6
INJURY OR ILLNESS.....	6
DISCIPLINE .....	7
ADULT GUESTS .....	7
TRANSPORTATION .....	7
CONFIDENTIALITY .....	8
INSURANCE .....	9
REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE .....	9
REPORTING VIOLATIONS TO CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES .....	9
ADMINISTRATION OF, EXCEPTIONS TO, AND CHANGES TO THIS POLICY .....	9

### **ADDITIONAL CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES**

Child Abuse Reporting Procedure  
Discipline Involving Children and Youth  
Volunteer Code of Ethics and Rules

### **CHILD PROTECTION FORMS**

GBFC Children and Youth Worker Application  
GBFC Child Protection Signature Page  
GBFC Volunteers Staff Mandated Background Clearances  
PA Consent / Release of Information – Authorization for PA Child Abuse History Certification  
Reducing the Risk Application Checklist  
GBFC Child Abuse Incident Report Form  
GBFC Illness and Injury Report Form

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy, adopted by the Board of Elders of Grace Bible Fellowship Church, Wallingford, PA, is to provide a safe and secure environment for all children and youth entrusted to our care and to comply with Pennsylvania State Law.

We want to encourage our children, youth and their families to grow in their relationship with God and one another. A safe and secure environment includes a formal, written policy to help prevent the occurrence of child abuse. The following policy and procedures are for the protection of our children, youth, employees, volunteers and our entire church family.

## **SCOPE**

This policy will apply to all current and future workers, compensated and/or volunteer, who have responsibility for the welfare of children and youth when they are under our supervision.

## **DEFINITIONS**

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will apply:

**Child, Youth, and Minor** - will be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen or comparable mental capacity.

**Adult** - will be defined as any individual at least eighteen years of age.

**Worker** - will be defined as any adult who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.

**Junior Worker** - will be defined as any worker under the age of eighteen enlisted to assist with the care of minors.

**Child Abuse** - will be defined as sexual abuse or exploitation of a child. Abuse includes any recent act or failure to act which causes non-accidental serious physical or mental injury to a child. (see "Child Abuse Reporting Procedure" for extended definition)

**Child Sexual Abuse** - will be defined as any sexual activity with a child regardless of the location. The abuser may be an adult, an adolescent, or another child. Child sexual abuse is criminal behavior that involves children in sexual behaviors for which they are not personally, socially, and developmentally ready. Child sexual abuse includes behaviors that involve touching and non-touching aspects. All child sexual abuse is an exploitation of a child's vulnerability and powerlessness in which the abuser is fully responsible for the action. Child sexual abuse may be violent or non-violent.

**Child Protection Designated Representatives** (Designated Reps) – will be defined as the persons appointed by the Elders to oversee and administer all Child Protection policies and procedures for the church. There must be at least two appointed representatives at all times, one of which must be a paid employee of the church.

**Child Clearance Administrator** – will be defined as the person responsible for running background checks and other administrative work related to child protection. The Child Clearance Administrator can be one of the Designated Representatives or can be a separate person appointed by the Elders and reporting directly to one of the Designated Representatives.

**Clearances** – will be defined as all clearances required by the state of Pennsylvania for any adult with responsibility over minors. These may include, but are not limited to, PA child abuse clearances, PA State Police criminal background checks, and fingerprint based federal criminal history checks.

**Church Event** – will be defined as any event that is sponsored and managed by Grace Bible Fellowship Church.

**Guest Speaker** – will be defined as any person who is not a worker but intends on administering a presentation to a group of children or youth for a special event or class.

**Under Care** – A person is considered to be “Under the Care of Grace BFC” when they have been assigned either an Elder, Host Team Member, or other Elder approved member of Grace that they are connected with for the purposes of personal and spiritual care, including walking with them as they connect to Grace. When a person is initially connected with someone to care for them, the office shall record the date and the person assigned to them. That “coming under care” date will be used for any waiting periods required for service in children’s ministry.

## **ADULT WORKER ENLISTMENT**

Any employee of Grace Bible Fellowship Church-who is responsible for the welfare of a child or has direct contact with children, must have the following clearances: State Criminal Background Check, Child Abuse Clearance, FBI Criminal History and any other clearances legally required.

Any volunteer worker responsible for the welfare of a child or having direct contact with children must have all legally required clearances on file with Grace Bible Fellowship Church; These currently include: State Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse Clearance. In addition, a worker must also get an FBI Criminal History completed if they have lived outside Pennsylvania within the last 10 years or they cannot swear in writing that they are not disqualified from serving pursuant to the conditions listed in the WHO SHOULD BE DENIED section of the law and has not been convicted of any of the enumerated offenses, or equivalents from another jurisdiction.

All clearance checks must be conducted by an appropriate agency recognized by the State of PA and verifiable copies must be provided to the church to keep on file. We require that initial clearance checks must have been run within the past 2 years to be accepted. Both employees and workers are required to renew their clearance checks in accordance with Pennsylvania state law. Note that PA State Law allows us to accept clearances run for employment elsewhere as part of our volunteer worker clearances but does not allow us to use clearances run for volunteer work elsewhere for any paid employee of the church.

Only the designated representatives and the child clearance administrator will have access to the criminal background check report. Recommendations will be given by these individual(s) to the appropriate ministry leader as to the qualification of the applicant.

To be cleared as a regular worker in children or youth ministries, an applicant must be under the care of Grace Bible Fellowship Church for a period of no less than six months. A written transfer of membership from another church, with references, may be adequate reason to waive the waiting period. Exceptions to the required waiting time may be granted only by the Board of Elders. To be considered, the worker must have all appropriate background checks completed and references checked prior to being granted an exception.

All worker applications and clearances must be submitted to the church, all required training must be completed, and all forms must be reviewed by at least one of the Designated Representatives before final approval is given to work with minors. Any prospective worker who has prior incidents of sexual misconduct or child abuse will not be allowed to be a worker in our children or youth ministries.

## **JUNIOR WORKER ENLISTMENT**

All perspective junior workers must have submitted written permission from a legal guardian giving them permission to serve in our Children's Ministry and stating that there is no legal or other known reason that would prevent the junior worker from being allowed to work with minors. Junior workers will be approved by one of the designated representatives and complete training before serving.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUTH WORKER APPLICATION FORM**

All workers will be required to complete our Child and Youth Worker Application Form providing personal and confidential information necessary for us to clear them for ministry. All personal information voluntarily disclosed, the results of all security background and reference checks, or the refusal of any person to participate in these will be maintained in the strictest of confidence.

Whether disclosed voluntarily, or as a result of the security background check, the following items, although not an exhaustive list, may disqualify a worker from participating in the leadership, sponsorship, or supervision of any activities or programs with minors:

#### WHO SHOULD BE DENIED

- Anyone who is named in the statewide child abuse database as a perpetrator of a founded report committed within the last five years.
- Anyone whose PA State Police Criminal Background check OR FBI check reveals a conviction for any of the following at any time in the past:
  - Criminal homicide; aggravated assault; stalking; kidnapping; unlawful restraint; rape; statutory sexual assault; involuntary deviate sexual intercourse; sexual assault; aggravated indecent assault; indecent assault; indecent exposure; incest; concealing death of child; endangering welfare of children; dealing in infant children; prostitution and related offenses; obscene and other sexual materials and performances; corruption of minors; sexual abuse of children; OR the attempt, solicitation or conspiracy to commit any of the above offenses;
- Anyone who's PA State Police Criminal Background check OR FBI check reveals a conviction for a drug or drug-related felony in the past five year.

All charges for these crimes, as well as any charges or convictions for other crimes not listed above, will be reviewed by the Designated Representative. The Designated Representative may also deem it wise to deny clearance to someone for items not listed above. In all cases of denial of worker status the reasons for denial should be documented in the applicants file, and the applicant informed of the reasons.

If questions arise from, or exceptions are proposed to, the above, they must be brought to the attention of the Board of Elders. All decisions of the Designated Representative can be appealed to the Board of Elders. The Board of Elders' decision is final.

#### **WORKER AND JUNIOR WORKER TRAINING**

Each new worker and junior worker will be required to read through the child protection policy, child abuse reporting procedure, the Discipline Involving Children and Youth policy, and the Volunteer Code of Ethics and Rules, and certify in writing that he or she has read the documents and is willing to follow the procedures outlined. They must also complete child protection training as prescribed by a designated representative. This training will include a review of the child protection policy and requirements for mandated reporters.

## **WORKER SUPERVISION**

Church staff and volunteer directors will supervise workers on an ongoing basis and make unannounced visits into classes or other program sites from time to time.

All doors to rooms where children are participating in learning or play activities will remain open, be removed, or have a window large enough to view the activities from outside the room.

A minimum of two adult workers will be in attendance at all times when children are being supervised during our programs. Some classes or programs may have only one worker in attendance during the class or program session; in these instances, doors to the classroom should remain open and there should be no fewer than three children with the worker. We do not allow minors to be alone with one adult on our premises or in any sponsored activity unless in a counseling situation.

All junior workers shall work with and be supervised by an approved adult worker

## **INJURY OR ILLNESS**

- Persons who are ill will not be permitted to participate in any ministry activity. An approved substitute must be used to take the place of workers who are ill.
- Participants should be returned to their parent or guardian as soon as illness is discovered. If this is not possible, then the person who is ill should be isolated in a manner that will allow supervision to continue until the person can be returned to their parent or guardian.
- Reasonable steps should be taken to avoid contact by anyone with body fluids.
- Any coordinator/supervisor who becomes aware of an injury to a worker or participant will take steps to ensure proper medical attention is sought for the injured person.
- Persons who have received an injury, which is obviously minor, should be given first aid as needed at the time of injury. If any doubt to the extent of the injury the person's parent or guardian should be notified at the time of the injury and an incident report should be filed with the church.
- Any injury, which may require medical treatment beyond simple first aid, should be given immediate attention: the parent or guardian of the injured person should be immediately notified, and an incident report should be filed with the church. An ambulance should also be called immediately if warranted by the injury.



- If a participant in a ministry activity develops a communicable illness within 24 hours of the activity (i.e. measles) the other participants who attended that activity will be notified by the department head as soon as they are aware of the illness. Also, an incident report should be filed with the church.

## **DISCIPLINE**

The goal of the children and youth programs at Grace Bible Fellowship Church is to provide a safe and beneficial environment for the spiritual growth of children. Our desire is to work alongside the parents in the development of their children and to provide open and honest communication with regard to matters of discipline. Positive behavioral management strategies will be used to direct and redirect children. (See “Discipline Involving Children and Youth” policy)

If any child is misbehaving in a manner that puts other children or themselves in danger, that child will be safely kept away from the other children and the parents will be notified immediately to assist. We reserve the right to temporarily deny child care services to any child who has and continues to pose a threat to themselves or others while under our supervision.

## **ADULT GUESTS**

Occasionally, guest speakers may be used for special events or classes. Guest speakers, whether a regular attendee or not, will be approved at the discretion of the designated representatives and will not be permitted to be responsible for the well-being of any children. There must be two adult workers, aside from the guest speaker, present at all times.

Legal guardians are permitted to stay in a class with their child. However, they will not be given responsibility for any other child(ren) unless they are cleared to be a worker.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Certain special events require the transportation of children to offsite locations. All children must obtain permission in writing from a legal guardian to travel in a car, van, or bus driven by any adult as part of a church sponsored event.

All drivers must be an adult and have submitted clearances to Grace Bible Fellowship Church or to their employer who is being used to hire drivers. No driver is permitted to be alone in a car with any minor during a sponsored event. We will aspire to have two adults in each vehicle for the protection of our children and workers.

Legal guardians are responsible for any transportation to or from the church. Legal guardians should use their own discretion when arranging transportation for their child. Workers must receive verbal or written permission from a legal guardian before driving any child before or after any church event or for any other reason.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Churches that screen employees/volunteers will generate a number of highly confidential documents. It is critical that the confidentiality of these documents be maintained. To insure confidentiality of all personnel forms the following will apply:

All confidential documentation pertaining to employee/ worker information will be kept in a locked file drawer in the church office and folders will be marked CONFIDENTIAL.

All documentation pertaining to reports of child abuse or other files directly related to child protection and safety will be kept in a locked file drawer in the church office and folders will be marked CONFIDENTIAL.

Information on former employees will be placed in a secured envelope and retained in a confidential file.

Church staff must be made aware of the location of all confidential files and warned that unauthorized access to any confidential information will be grounds for dismissal and possible legal action.

The disposal policy for information relating to individuals who apply for but are not hired/permitted to volunteer will comply with EEOC and state laws requiring that they are retained for a period of three years.

All files relating to workers or junior workers that are approved to serve in our ministries shall be kept for as long as they are a part of our church or ministries, and for at least an additional three years.

All files relating to reports of child abuse or other similar claims shall be kept at least as long as all legal statute of limitations or sentencing related to those claims.

All confidential files that are to be disposed of must be shredded by someone with proper authorization to access and administer those files.

## **INSURANCE**

Grace Bible Fellowship Church will obtain a sufficient level of liability insurance that would cover child abuse and sexual misconduct claims. The church will have levels of coverage which are required for limited immunity.

## **REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE**

All suspected child abuse or child sexual abuse MUST be handled immediately in accordance with Grace BFC's "Child Abuse Reporting" procedures (see separate document). This includes compliance with all Pennsylvania State Mandated Reporter laws and any other legal requirements.

## **REPORTING VIOLATIONS TO CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES**

Any violations to this Policy, including but not limited to unauthorized workers interacting with minors, policies not being upheld, suspected falsification of clearances, or charges against any worker that may disqualify them from working with children, should be reported to a Designated Representative who will be responsible to research the claims, follow-up with appropriate workers, place a written account in the Child Protection files, and report back to the Elders and the person making the original complaint.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF, EXCEPTIONS TO, AND CHANGES TO THIS POLICY**

This policy shall be administered by the Designated Representatives. Any questions about the intent of this policy, requests for exceptions, or changes to the policy shall go to the Board of Elders, whose decisions are final. If any part of this policy is found at any time to be in violation of any local, state or federal laws, or if those laws require something not covered in this policy, those laws will supersede and replace the effected sections of this policy.

# Grace Bible Fellowship Church

## CHILD ABUSE REPORTING PROCEDURE

~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on August 21, 2018 ~

### **Purpose**

This procedure shall be followed if abuse or neglect of a child occurs in the ministry of GBFC or evidence of abuse or neglect is suspected while that child is under the care, supervision, guidance or training of Grace Bible Fellowship Church, Wallingford, Pennsylvania (Grace BFC). This procedure shall also be followed if a child under the care of Grace BFC has evidence of or gives witness to possible abuse or neglect in the recent past, whether that abuse occurred within or outside the ministry of Grace.

Any person having cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been or may be adversely affected by abuse or neglect will report his or her belief in accordance with this procedure. Every allegation of sexual offense or molestation should be investigated promptly and thoroughly. It is our policy to cooperate fully with law enforcement officials. Confidentiality of the investigation shall be maintained as much as possible. Confidentiality is out of concern for the victim and any accused.

### **Contents**

Purpose .....	1
Contents .....	1
Definitions .....	2
Steps to follow if abuse or neglect of a child occurs in the ministry of GBFC.....	2
Steps to follow if there is evidence of child abuse from outside the ministry of GBFC .....	4
Appendix A – Definition of Child Abuse as included in PA Child Protective Services Law .....	5
Appendix B – Answers to Common Question on Mandated Reporters .....	6
Current Designated Representatives and Key Contact Information .....	7

### **Related Child Protection policies**

Child Protection Policy  
Discipline Involving Children and Youth Policy  
Volunteer Code of Ethics and Rules

### **Related Reporting forms**

Reducing the Risk Application Checklist  
GBFC Child Abuse Incident Report Form

## **Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions will apply:

**Child, youth, and minor** - will be defined as any individual under the age of eighteen or comparable mental capacity.

**Worker** - will be defined as anyone over the age of 18 who serves as a volunteer and/or paid person given the responsibility of working with or caring for minors.

**Child Abuse** - will be defined as physical or sexual abuse or exploitation of a child. Abuse includes any recent act or failure to act which causes non-accidental serious physical or mental injury to a child. (see Appendix A for extended PA definition of Child Abuse)

**Child Protection Designated Representatives** (Designated Rep)– will be defined as the persons appointed by the Elders to oversee and administer all Child Protection policies and procedures for the church. There must at all time be at least two appointed representatives, at least one of which must be a paid employee of the church.

**PA Mandated Reporter** – Those who the state of PA requires by law to report all suspected child abuse to the state. Who is a mandated reporter will be defined as per the current legal definition in Pennsylvania, which as of July 2018 included the following that are relevant to our church context:

- Clergyman, priest, rabbi, minister, Christian Science practitioner, religious healer or spiritual leader of any regularly established church or other religious organization;
- An individual paid or unpaid; who, on the basis of the individual's role as an integral part of a regularly scheduled program, activity or service, accepts responsibility for a child;
- An individual supervised or managed by a person listed above who has direct contact with children in the course of their employment; and
- An independent contractor who has direct contact with children.

## **Steps to follow if abuse or neglect of a child occurs in the ministry of GBFC**

1. Immediately remove the child from harm and remove suspected abuser from the environment.

2. Call **Childline Abuse Registry (800-932-0313)**.

**\*\*IMPORTANT LEGAL NOTICE:** All adult workers within our Children and Youth Ministries are considered by the State of Pennsylvania to be Mandated Reporters with respect to any suspected incidence of Child Abuse of children under their care. According to PA law the Mandated Reporter must call Childline immediate upon suspecting abuse. The mandated reported must make the call

themselves, they cannot delegate it. They may not talk to a supervisor before making the immediate oral report, even to discuss the propriety of making a report. If the mandated reporter is unsure whether the situation warrants a report, s/he may immediately call an attorney for advice on the spot (ie. No callbacks allowed). However, if an attorney is not reached immediately, a report must be made immediately.

3. Immediately find and inform either the **Director of Children's Ministry** or one of Grace BFC's **Child Protection Designated Representatives** about the incident (current Designated Reps are listed at the end of this policy). It is the responsibility of the Designated Rep to collect data concerning the child's name, address and other pertinent information through discussions with the initial reporter and other staff members. The name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, if available, will be obtained. The Designated Rep will also record who reported the incident, all other workers, children and witnesses in the immediate vicinity of the incident and all workers and children who may have had direct contact with the accused through that program / event. Use the "**Reducing the Risk Application Checklist**" to complete the Designated Rep responsibilities involved with the occurrence. The Designated Rep will be the main contact for the incident.
4. Within 48 hours of the incident the reporter must write and submit a written report. On the same day that the case is first reported verbally to the Designated Rep, the Designated Rep will document the incident on the "**GBFC Child Abuse Incident Report Form**". If a report was made to the ChildLine Registry, then the Designated Rep must submit all legally required paperwork to the State. (currently a CY47 report is required within 48 hours).
5. All employees and volunteer workers are required to cooperate fully and openly with law enforcement. Throughout the investigation the reporter, the victim, and the accused shall be kept informed of overall progress and they shall each be informed of the final findings.
6. If one of the Designated Reps is among those suspected of abuse or is suspected of neglect of duties in following up on a report of abuse, then the Senior Pastor and the Chairman of the Board of Elders shall immediately take over all investigative and other responsibilities of the Designated Rep. with regard to Child Protection.
7. While any suspected incident of child abuse is being investigated, the accused will be barred from serving in any youth or children's ministries until the investigation is complete. If the accusations are proven to be founded the offender will be barred from having any contact with children within the ministry contexts of Grace BFC. If the convicted offender is a paid employee of Grace, their employment will be terminated according to employment laws.
8. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation as much as possible out of concern for the victim and the accused. All documentation gathered throughout the investigation will be marked CONFIDENTIAL and handled according to our Child Protection Policy confidentiality section. Upon completion of the investigation if there are other concerned parties that need to be informed of the

final verdict we will seek to balance transparency and confidentiality to assure the injured parties are protected.

9. Efforts will be made to keep the reporters / witnesses of the incident confidential (with the exception of cooperating with legal authorities). No victim involved in an allegation or anyone responsible for reporting an allegation will be retaliated against in any way.
10. All inquiries into the incident outside of law enforcement officials, including all media inquiries, will be referred to the Designated Rep. or to a spokesperson appointed by the Board of Elders.

### **Steps to follow if there is evidence of child abuse from outside the ministry of GBFC**

1. If any child was potentially abused within the ministry of Grace BFC refer to the procedure in the previous section on “Steps to follow if abuse or neglect of a child occurs in the ministry of GBFC.” If any child under the supervision of Grace BFC has clear evidence of current abuse occurring outside the ministry of Grace, or if you are given a disclosure that an identifiable child under your care has been abused outside of Grace BFC, or if someone over the age of 14 discloses to you that they have abused a child in the past 2 years, then you must follow the procedures below.

#### **2. Call **Childline Abuse Registry (800-932-0313).****

**\*\*IMPORTANT LEGAL NOTICE:** All adult workers within our Children’s Ministry are considered by the State of Pennsylvania to be Mandated Reporters with respect to any suspected incidence of Child Abuse of children under their care. According to PA law the Mandated Reporter must call Childline immediate upon receiving a disclosure of abuse of an identifiable child, even if that abuse has occurred outside of the ministry of Grace. The mandated reported must make the call themselves, they cannot delegate it. They may not talk to a supervisor before making the immediate oral report, even to discuss the propriety of making a report. If the mandated reporter is unsure whether the situation warrants a report, s/he may immediately call an attorney for advice on the spot (ie. No callbacks allowed). However, if an attorney is not reached immediately, a report must be made immediately.

3. Immediately find and inform either the **Director of Children’s Ministry** or one of Grace BFC’s **Child Protection Designated Representatives** about the incident (current Designated Reps are listed at the end of this policy). It is the responsibility of the Designated Rep to collect data concerning the child’s name, address and other pertinent information through discussions with the initial reporter and other staff members. The name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child, if available, will be obtained. The Designated Rep will also record who reported the incident, along with the names of any other workers, children and witnesses that observed or heard the disclosure of abuse.
4. Within 48 hours of the incident the reporter must write and submit a written report. On the same day that the case is first reported verbally to the Designated Rep, the Designated Rep will document the incident on the **“GBFC Child Abuse Incident Report Form”**. If a report was made to the ChildLine Registry, then the Designated Rep must submit all legally required paperwork to the State.

5. All employees and volunteer workers are required to cooperate fully and openly with law enforcement.
  6. If the suspected perpetrators of the abuse are within the congregation of Grace BFC, then the accused will be barred from serving in any youth or children's ministries until the investigation is complete. If the accusations are proven to be founded the offender will be barred from having any contact with children within the ministry contexts of Grace BFC. If the convicted offender is a paid employee of Grace their employment will be terminated according to employment laws.
  7. Confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible out of concern for the victim and the accused. All documentation gathered will be marked CONFIDENTIAL and handled according to our Child Protection Policy confidentiality section. Upon completion of any investigation if there are other concerned parties that need to be informed of the final verdict we will seek to balance transparency and confidentiality to assure the injured parties are protected.
  8. Efforts will be made to keep the reporters / witnesses of the incident confidential (with the exception of cooperating with legal authorities). No victim involved in an allegation or anyone responsible for reporting an allegation will be retaliated against in any way.
  9. All inquiries into the matter outside of law enforcement officials, including all media inquiries, will be referred to the Designated Rep. or to a spokesperson appointed by the Board of Elders.
- 

## **Appendix A – Definition of Child Abuse as included in PA Child Protective Services Law**

(reprinted from <http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/about/faqs/index.htm> , July 12, 2018)

Child abuse, according to the CPSL, means intentionally, knowingly or recklessly doing any of the following:

- Causing bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Fabricating, feigning or intentionally exaggerating or inducing a medical symptom or disease which results in a potentially harmful medical evaluation or treatment to the child through any recent act.
- Causing or substantially contributing to serious mental injury to a child through any act or failure to act or a series of such acts or failures to act.
- Causing sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any act or failure to act.
- Creating a reasonable likelihood of bodily injury to a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Creating a likelihood of sexual abuse or exploitation of a child through any recent act or failure to act.
- Causing serious physical neglect of a child.
- Causing the death of the child through any act or failure to act.
- Engaging a child in a severe form of trafficking in persons or sex trafficking, as those terms are defined under section 103 of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (114 Stat. 1466, 22 U.S.C. § 7102 ).



Child abuse also includes certain acts in which the act itself constitutes abuse without any resulting injury or condition. These recent acts include any of the following:

- Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child in a manner that endangers the child.
- Unreasonably restraining or confining a child, based on consideration of the method, location or the duration of the restraint or confinement.
- Forcefully shaking a child under one year of age.
- Forcefully slapping or otherwise striking a child under one year of age.
- Interfering with the breathing of a child.
- Causing a child to be present during the operation of a methamphetamine laboratory, provided that the violation is being investigated by law enforcement.
- Leaving a child unsupervised with an individual, other than the child's parent, who the parent knows or reasonably should have known was required to register as a Tier II or III sexual offender or has been determined to be a sexually violent predator or sexually violent delinquent.

"Recent" is defined as an abusive act within two years from the date the report is made to ChildLine. Sexual abuse, serious mental injury, serious physical neglect and deaths have no time limit.

---

## **Appendix B – Answers to Common Question on Mandated Reporters**

(reprinted from <http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov/about/faqs/index.htm> , July 12, 2018)

### **When must a mandated reporter make a report?**

A mandated reporter must make a report of suspected child abuse if they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse under any of the following circumstances:

- The mandated reporter comes into contact with the child in the course of employment, occupation and practice of a profession or through a regularly scheduled program, activity or service.
- The mandated reporter is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child, or is affiliated with an agency, institution, organization, school, regularly established church or religious organization or other entity that is directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance or training of the child.
- A person makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that an identifiable child is the victim of child abuse.
- An individual 14 years of age or older makes a specific disclosure to the mandated reporter that the individual has committed child abuse.

### **Must I report suspected abuse if I learn of the abuse from someone other than the child who was allegedly abused?**

Yes. Nothing requires the mandated reporter have direct contact with the child in order to make a report.

**How does a mandated reporter make a report if they suspect child abuse?**

Mandated reporters must make an immediate and direct report of suspected child abuse to ChildLine either electronically at [www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis](http://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis) or by calling 1-800-932-0313.

**What if a mandated reporter fails to follow the law?**

The penalties for a mandated reporter who willfully fails to report child abuse range from a misdemeanor of second degree to a felony of the second degree.

**Am I protected from civil and criminal liability if I make a report of suspected child abuse?**

Yes, persons making a report of suspected child abuse are immune from civil and criminal liability as long as the report was made in good faith. The good faith of a mandated reporter is assumed.

**If I make a report is my identity protected?**

The identity of the person making the report is kept confidential with the exception of being released to law enforcement officials or the district attorney's office. Law enforcement and district attorney's office must treat the mandated reporter as a confidential informant.

**Additional Official PA Child Safety Information:** go to [www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov](http://www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov)

---

## **Current Designated Representatives and Key Contact Information**

*(updated August 2018)*

**Grace BFC Director of Children's Ministries**

Daniel Phillips, [dphillips@gracbfc.org](mailto:dphillips@gracbfc.org), cell phone: (215) 218-8144

**Grace BFC Child Protection Designated Representatives**

Pastor Mark Bickel, [mbickel@gracebfc.org](mailto:mbickel@gracebfc.org), cell phone: (484) 788-9026

Daniel Phillips, [dphillips@gracbfc.org](mailto:dphillips@gracbfc.org), cell phone: (215) 218-8144

**Grace BFC Child Clearance Administrator**

Barbara Brennan, [office@gracebfc.org](mailto:office@gracebfc.org), office phone: (610) 876-8725

**PA ChildLine (Report all suspected child abuse or neglect)**

**1-800-932-0313**

# DISCIPLINE INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on August 1, 2018 ~*

The goal of the children and youth programs at Grace Bible Fellowship Church is to provide a safe and beneficial environment for the spiritual growth of children. Our desire is to work alongside the parents in the development of their children and to provide open and honest communication with regard to matters of discipline. The following are guidelines to help in this effort.

**APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE:** When behavioral problems occur, persons working with children should take the following course of action:

1. Communicate with the child at their level and talk to them in a calm quiet manner about what behavior is expected.
2. If misbehavior continues pre-school children may be put in "Time Out" (sitting them in a classroom chair for a few minutes of non-participation).
3. When disciplinary action is conducted the teacher should communicate the incident to the child's parents or guardians after class and also to the Ministry Supervisor.
4. If the child's behavior continues to be disruptive or dangerous the immediate assistance of the Ministry Supervisor should be sought or another adult to bring the child's parent or guardian to the class to remove the child.
5. In the event that the undesired behavior is happening off church property or at a time when the parents or guardians are not in building the parents will be called and a plan of action will be decided with the parent or guardian, ministry volunteer and the Ministry Supervisor.

**INAPPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE:** Any person working with children shall not engage in any of the following actions toward children:

1. Inflict corporal punishment in any manner upon a child's body (hit, spank, slap, beat, shake, pinch or any other measure that produces physical discomfort.)
2. Cruel, harsh, unusual, humiliating or frightening methods of discipline including threatening the use of physical punishment.
3. Placement of a child in an unsupervised place or locked and/or dark room.
4. Public or private humiliation, yelling or abusive or profane language.

Guardians will be notified if their child displays persistent negative behavior and a conference may be set up to establish a personalized strategy for the future. We reserve the right to temporarily deny child care services to any child who has and continues to pose a threat to themselves or others while under our supervision.

# **VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS AND RULES**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on April 1, 2015 ~*

## **Volunteer Copy**

While acting in a volunteer in the children and youth programs of Grace Bible Fellowship Church a volunteer will endeavor to do the following.

1. Volunteers with minors will not abuse any minors, to include the following:
  - a. Any direct sexual activity in the presence of or in association with a minor;
  - b. Any display or demonstration of sexual activity, abuse, insinuation of abuse, or evidence of abusive conduct toward a minor;
  - c. Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between any person and a minor;
  - d. Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind to a minor(s);
  - e. Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury to a minor;
  - f. Physical neglect of a minor, including failure to provide adequate supervision in relation to the activities of Grace Bible Fellowship Church;
  - g. Mental or emotional injury to a minor;
  - h. The presence or possession of obscene or pornographic materials at any function of Grace Bible Fellowship Church;
  - i. The presence, possession, or being under the influence of any illegal, illicit drugs;
  - j. The consumption of or being under the influence of alcohol while leading or participating in a function for minors of Grace Bible Fellowship Church.
2. Volunteers will have a Criminal Background Check completed and approved every 3 years.
3. Volunteers must treat all people of all races, religions and cultures with respect and consideration.
4. Volunteers will not use or tolerate the use of profanity in the presence of minors.
5. Volunteers must be free of physical or psychological conditions that might adversely affect any minor's health including, but not limited to, contagious diseases.
6. Volunteers will portray a positive role model for minors by maintaining an attitude of respect, loyalty, patience, courtesy and maturity.
7. Volunteers will be expected to act and respond with Christian love and understanding in all situations.
8. Volunteers will do everything in their power to avoid being put in a situation where they are alone with a minor other than their own.

# **PHILOSOPHY of PUBLIC and CORPORATE WORSHIP**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on April 18, 2017 ~*

*“God is holy and worthy to be praised. We will gather together as God’s people to focus our worship on Him through His Son, Jesus Christ.” – from Grace Bible Fellowship Church’s Vision Statement (February 11, 2009)*

This Philosophy of Public and Corporate Worship strives to describe what this vision means when applied to the Sunday morning gathering of believers for a worship service at Grace Bible Fellowship Church in Wallingford. Scriptural and personal/cultural considerations of public and corporate worship are discussed and guiding principles are stated. With Spirit-led consideration, these principles should be used to evaluate and make recommendations for specific elements of the worship service.

## ***Definition of Worship***

Public and corporate worship is the “drawing near of the hearts of the congregants to God” (Isaiah 29:13). We see this as necessarily having both an inward and outward dimension; congregants recognize and are moved by the majesty and goodness of God, and participate corporately in responses brought about by that recognition. This involves praising Him, acknowledging who He is, and learning more about Him in the process. Public and corporate worship during the Sunday morning service will help us build up ourselves and the church (1 Corinthians 14:26), and leads us to a commitment to continue that worship in other ways throughout the week.

## ***Scriptural Considerations***

The Bible mentions the word “worship” over two hundred times. There are two dimensions to worship in Scripture: bending the knee/bowing and service. The focus of this document is on the former, even though we recognize that the two meanings are inseparable and that, in a sense, all of life for the believer may be considered an offering to the Lord and thus worship (Romans 12:1). Additionally, it is important that God’s people come before him in private worship and prayer in their personal devotional experience throughout all aspects of their lives.

Biblical references identify key characteristics of worship. Foremost among these is the concept of “praise,” a word that occurs over three hundred times in the Bible. Praise, as evidenced in Scripture, can be a verbal, public proclamation; a silent, private proclamation; or a set of actions that are the means by which these are carried out. These proclamations and actions are focused towards recognizing God for who He is and what He has done; acknowledging and proclaiming

Him in all of his fullness; confessing and repenting of sins; and showing reverence, thankfulness, and commitment to obedience.

Scripture also points to certain key elements of a worship service, as summarized by the denomination's Biblical Principles for Living:

101-1.6 Examples of corporate worship in the New Testament include: the reading of Scripture, prayer, praise, confession, singing, giving, thanksgiving, preaching and teaching, and the ordinances. The expression of these may be shaped by the cultural setting of a particular church and must be done in a fitting and orderly way.

These characteristics and elements of worship appear to have two key common denominators. First, they all involve intentional action and active participation by worshipers. All actions are, and must be, directed towards God in response to who He is. Secondly, these intentional actions need to be underpinned by Godly motives that go to the heart, that are not a mere following of rules and traditions, and that are done in such a way that they are pleasing to God, keeping the focus on Him. God must be the center of the focus of our attention in worship, ensuring that all actions of worship are ones that are pleasing to Him and seeking His will for how He would be worshiped, and not guided by what will please the worshipers for one reason or another.

God-centered and God-pleasing worship must always be Spirit-led and based in Scripture, so as not to fall into what God warns us about: "...These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught." (Isaiah 29:13).

### ***Personal and Cultural Considerations***

A God-pleasing and meaningful time of public and corporate worship is promoted and hindered by a variety of things that are personal and cultural in nature. The church and our worship leaders have to maximize what "enables" people and minimize what "distracts" people from worship, and do so in such a way that they do not succumb to the temptations to appeal to what pleases people rather than what pleases God. When it is felt that culture needs to be changed in light of God's will for our worship, these "enablers" and "distracters" will have to be the focal points of attention.

God has created all people as unique emotional and rational beings. They are different in the way that they feel, react and respond emotionally and physically, their likes and dislikes, and the way that they learn. They will, therefore, vary significantly over the elements of a worship service that would enable them to express their worship to God. It is likely that one element may be an enabler for one individual and a distracter for another.

Since people come from a variety of different backgrounds, culture permeates worship. This is especially true of public and corporate worship, where people assemble publicly to praise God and draw near to Him. When the worship service is held, where it is held, the symbols portrayed

in the environment in which it is held, the particular way the worship service is structured, the elements of that worship service, the length, the type of music and instruments, and type of participation all are deeply shaped by cultural factors, preferences, and traditions. Grace Bible Fellowship Church strives to build its own culture for public and corporate worship as it navigates the different preferences coming out of the different backgrounds and cultures of its congregants and those whom it seeks to incorporate.

These personal and cultural differences, therefore, can be both a source of excitement and exploration that energize, and/or sources of mental, emotional, or even physical stress. Many times, they are both. Determining what is best for the congregation as a whole is, therefore, a particularly difficult task, and recommendations for particular elements should be prayerfully sought, finding their basis in Scripture.

### ***Guiding Principles***

The Scriptural and philosophical elements explored above lead us to guiding principles for public and corporate worship. These principles are designed to stand the test of time and are to be used as a basis for specific, practical and concrete recommendations for the elements of the Sunday morning worship service.

1. Worship should be carried out in such a way that it not only conforms to Scripture, but draws on practices detailed in Scripture for the honoring of God for our guidance and enrichment.
2. As we design God-pleasing times of worship, it should take into account the individuals and culture of the particular congregation, approaching any recommendations for change in humility, with care and sensitivity.
3. Subject to God's will, we should be constantly searching for ways to enhance enablers and mitigate distracters to worship, knowing that they may vary between individuals. In this, we should pay special attention to the emotional and cognitive aspects of worship.

# Practice of the LORD'S SUPPER in the LIFE and MINISTRY of GRACE BFC

~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford in June, 2017 ~

## 1. AN OPERATING DEFINITION

- a. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the New Testament,<sup>(2)</sup> in which, by the giving and receiving of bread and wine,<sup>(3)</sup> according to the appointment of Jesus Christ, His death is proclaimed. Those who worthily partake in this remembrance of Him feed upon Him to their spiritual nourishment and growth in grace, have their union and communion with Him confirmed, and testify and renew their thankfulness and commitment to God and their mutual love and fellowship each with the other as members of the same mystical body.
  - i. Addendum (additional clarifiers we feel helpful)
    1. <sup>(2)</sup> entrusted to the Church of Christ and its Spiritual oversight
      - a. Per Paul's admonition to the Church in Corinth in their disregard for the Church of Christ.
    2. <sup>(3)</sup> (and/or grape juice)
      - a. Per our present action
    3. We also were concerned to highlight the aspects of remembrance, reconciliation, and the forward-looking dimension of the supper as foretaste of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

## 2. ACTION to be TAKEN in LIGHT of DEFINITION

- a. We will endeavor to appropriately emphasize the various Spiritual effects and benefits of the Lord's Supper as we lead our people in enjoyment of them.
  - i. In how we frame the Lord's Supper verbally from the front
  - ii. In occasional sermons that focus more on the Supper
  - iii. Perhaps in the way in which we partake from time to time (mode)
- b. We will offer the Lord's Supper to those members<sup>1</sup> of our Church who are unable to be present at worship on Communion Sunday on account of physical/health limitations.
  - i. Who qualifies to receive the Supper outside the corporate gathering.
    1. Those who are sick, hospitalized, or shut-in at home or other facilities.
    2. We would consider requests, on a case by case basis, from those required to work on a communion Sunday.
    3. The intention of this policy is not to accommodate those who voluntarily chose to be away on any given communion Sunday
  - ii. Addendum
    1. <sup>(1)</sup> This is a statement is only in relation to members. We feel a responsibility by virtue of our membership covenant to offer communion to members unable to be present. It is not to say we



would *not* consider taking to active participants who are non-members. But that is not our question here. And again, this is not intended for members who voluntarily choose not worship with us on Communion Sunday.

iii. Who will officiate the Lord's Supper in these contexts?

1. Pastors, Elders, and/or Deacons who have been

a. trained in the Biblical theology and mechanics of the Supper,

i. including the appropriate warnings and examinations associated with the Supper

ii. will have a script for training purposes and also available for ongoing use as needed

b. mentored through one or two opportunities to facilitate it on their own, and

c. approved and commissioned by the board of elders to officiate the Supper

iv. When will this be administered?

1. The intent would be to administer it primarily on Communion Sundays – the day of the week set aside by our Lord for corporate remembrance and celebration of His death/resurrection, and the particular day Grace BFC has set aside to partake of the supper together as a body.

a. The intent here is to receive the Supper as an extension of the Supper shared together by the Body during corporate worship.

b. Being sensitive to the potential difficulty of administering the Supper in certain circumstances on Communion Sunday, we would be willing to do so at a later point in the week.

c. A point person will indirectly oversee the administration of the Supper, ensuring it is administered faithfully and efficiently.

c. The Supper could be administered in other corporate gatherings of the Church under the following conditions

i. The occasion(s) is approved by the board of elders

ii. The Supper is led by an officiant approved by the Board of Elders.

**3. RELATED GUIDELINES FOR APPROVAL**

a. Can someone other than a pastor, elder, or deacon administer the Supper?

i. **Yes**, given they have successfully completed the same process for approval

b. Can a woman as officiant administer the Supper?

- i. **Yes**, but only in the same contexts in which they are permitted to teach the Word corporately and after successfully completing the approval process
- c. Can a woman serve the Supper as a non-officiant? For instance, can a female deacon serve communion on a Sunday morning?
  - i. **Yes**
- d. Can other pastors and elders officiate the Supper during Lord's Day Worship?
  - i. **Yes**
- e. Can non-elders and non-deacons serve the Supper during Lord's Day Worship?
  - i. **Yes**, with the approval of the board of elders
- f. Can we utilize other formats in celebration of the Supper
  - i. **Yes**, with the approval of the board of elders, for example:
    1. Come and receive the elements from a central station(s)
    2. Partake as part of a full meal shared together
    3. Intinction – individually dipping bread in a common cup passed around
    4. Singing while the elements are passed around
- g. Should we wear suits for the Supper?
  - i. It is the opinion of the sub-committee that the table should **not** be symbolically elevated above the pulpit. Thus we would recommend dressing in similar attire for the administration of the Supper as we do for the administration of the Word.
  - ii. We will work towards development of a *Service Decorum* for all those helping lead/facilitate the various aspects of our worship service.
- h. Is there an age requirement for participation in the Supper?
  - i. **No**

#### 4. RELATED QUESTIONS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

- a. Should the Supper be administered more frequently on Sunday mornings, (i.e. as often as we administer the Word)?
  - i. There are numerous perspectives and opinions on this question. The committee sees no definition answer from Scripture. The committee recommends that the board regularly consider, in light of the Spiritual benefits enjoyed in the Supper, whether we should be partaking more frequently.
- b. Should someone be baptized before partaking of the Supper?
  - i. Though we do not require baptism before coming to the table, the logical order from Scripture seems to be that baptism is the initiatory rite into the communion of the body. Similarly, if someone is not fit or willing to be baptized, we question their fitness for the table.

# **Facility Use Policy**

*Coming in late August 2019*

## **Grace BFC Wedding Policy**

*~ Revised and Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on March 19, 2019 ~*

Grace Bible Fellowship Church (Grace BFC) believes that marriage is the joining together of one man and one woman in a covenant union instituted and ordained by God. Furthermore, God's Word declares that the expression of sexual relations is authorized only in the union of male and female within the bond of marriage. Scripture plainly teaches that homosexual lust and practice are sinful in God's sight. Finally, God, in His wisdom, has created each person with a unique design as He wills. We believe that the gender of a person is determined by God and should not be changed or modified after birth.

Based on these statements, the following will apply to all marriages being performed by pastors/officiants at Grace BFC that use its facilities:

- A. Pastors/officiants will only perform a marriage at Grace BFC between a man and woman as described above. Both the husband and the wife must be believers who follow the Scriptures found in the Holy Bible. At least one of them must be a Member of Grace BFC or be the child of a Member of Grace BFC.
- B. The Church's facilities will only be allowed to be used by the couple being married if at least one of them is a Member of Grace BFC or one of them is the child of a member of Grace BFC. The pastor/officiant performing the ceremony must be a believer and in agreement with the BFC Faith & Order and the Holy Scriptures.
- C. All requests for a wedding ceremony at Grace BFC must be submitted to the Elders for approval. Decisions about the use of the church facilities are the responsibility of the Elders, and their decisions are final.

## **Severe Weather Policy**

### **(Grace BFC Public Services and/or Sponsored Events)**

*~ Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on January 19, 2017 ~*

#### **Sunday Worship Services**

- The Senior Pastor, in consultation with at least one other pastor or elder, will make the decision for a delayed opening or cancellation of a Sunday worship service in the event of severe weather.
- Other potential reasons for a delayed opening or cancellation include but are not limited to power outage in the building, no plumbing or heating, or a government issued state of emergency.
- The decision for a delayed opening or cancellation of a Sunday worship service will be made by 7 AM that morning.
- Anytime a Sunday worship service has a delayed opening or cancellation due to severe weather, it should be anticipated that there will be no children's ministry or nursery coverage provided by church staff or volunteers.
- A delayed opening Sunday worship service will begin at 10:30 AM. We will make every effort that the ice and/or snow will be cleared from the sidewalks and parking lot on the church property and any other issues will be resolved in time to assure the property is as safe as possible for the service to proceed.
- It should be anticipated that there will be no after service classes or coffee time offered on delayed opening Sunday.
- The Sr. Pastor is responsible to communicate with that day's worship leader about any changes to the service, and the worship leader is responsible to communicate with the worship team, tech team and any others involved in the service to determine what personnel are able to serve and set the time for any practice or sound check needed prior to the service start time.
- A canceled Sunday worship service will mean that the sidewalks, parking lot and/or church facilities are deemed unsafe for use and all services and related Sunday events will therefore be cancelled.
- Grace BFC does not assume responsibility for the condition and safety of the roads leading to the church property. The decision to travel will be left up to each individual attendee. We urge discretion and wisdom to be exercised in making this decision.
- In the event of a Sunday worship service delayed opening or cancellation, the elders and the church office will be notified and the elders will contact members of their Grace Link groups via email, text or telephone.
- Additionally, the information will be posted on the Grace BFC website as well as a sign on the main entrance doors to the church. Those desiring a phone message may request as much from their elder.

### **Wednesday Evening Group Meetings**

- The Senior Pastor, in consultation with at least one other pastor or elder, will make the decision for the cancellation of Wednesday Evening Group Meetings in the event of severe weather.
- Other potential reasons for a cancellation include but are not limited to power outage in the building, no plumbing or heating, or a government issued state of emergency.
- If Strath Haven School District closes at any point in time on a Wednesday on account of snow, all evening meetings and activities at Grace BFC will be cancelled.
- The decision to cancel Wednesday evening group meetings will be made by 6 PM that evening.
- A cancelled Wednesday evening group meeting will mean that the sidewalks and/or the parking lot are deemed unsafe for use and meetings will therefore be cancelled.
- Grace BFC does not assume responsibility for the condition and safety of the roads leading to the church property. The decision to travel will be left up to each individual attendee. We urge discretion and wisdom to be exercised in making this decision.
- Additionally, the information will be posted on the Grace BFC website as well as a sign on the main entrance doors to the church.

### **GBFC Sponsored Events**

- Grace BFC sponsored events held during any other time of the week may be cancelled or delayed by severe weather threat or other potentially dangerous circumstances. The decision to cancel or delay any such event will be made on a case by case basis and determined by the event coordinator in conjunction with at least one pastor or elder.
- In the event of such a cancellation or delay, the event coordinator assumes responsibility to inform the church office, the elders and their event participants. Additionally, the information will be posted on the Grace BFC website if appropriate.

# **Media Use Policy**

## **(Use of Audio, Image, Video and other Recordings)**

*~ Revised and Adopted by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on March 19, 2019 ~*

### **PURPOSE**

This policy is to protect the people associated with Grace Bible Fellowship Church (Grace BFC) and friends of Grace BFC from having pictures, movies, sounds and other electronic media ("recordings") appearing in 'public' places such as, but not limited to: web sites, brochures, advertising, flyers and other places where they might be viewed or heard by the 'general' public without the person's permission.

This is **NOT** intended to limit the use of electronic media being used within Grace BFC. Examples are pictures shown before, during or after a Service, celebration, small groups, trips and other things that would be seen by people that attend these events. This is also **NOT** intended to limit the posting of recorded media on any password protected sites that only those connected to Grace BFC can access. Although in all the cases, including those listed here, the church will seek to respect requests from individuals to not use specific recordings in ways for which they disapprove.

### **SCOPE**

This policy covers pictures, movies, sounds and other electronic media captured or recorded by any person or persons who are representing Grace BFC in a leadership or coordinating capacity. The event could be on church property or at church events that are held offsite.

People taking their own personal recordings are not included in this policy unless the church is given the recordings to use in web sites, brochures, advertising, flyers and other places where it can be viewed or heard by the 'general' public without the person's permission.

### **PROCEDURE/POLICY**

No recording should be made for the purpose of embarrassing or dishonoring the person being recorded. If a recording is later seen to be embarrassing or dishonoring it should be immediately destroyed.

No recording should be made or kept that would be considered NOT appropriate for church use.

With the exception of security cameras (addressed separately), we will do all recording openly, in plain sight, and will respect the wishes of anyone present to not be included in the recording. We will not use secret, hidden cameras or microphones, or in other ways deliberately conceal that recordings are being made.

We will use discretion in the recording and distribution of any testimonies or other recordings that may be very personal or potentially confidential in nature, looking out for the recorded persons best interest, and always respecting any wishes they communicate as to the use of such recordings.

People connected with Grace BFC will be given the opportunity to sign a general release to use recordings of them and their family. No pressure will be given to sign, and the complete Media Use Policy shall be available for review at any time. If a person gives permission that permission shall remain in effect until the person revokes it in writing. A person

always has the right to grant or revoke specific privileges for any given recording or use at any time regardless of what general permissions they have or have not granted.

If anyone is clearly identifiable in a recording that has not given general permission for the church to use their recording, specific permission to use that recording should be sought. All such permission should be in writing.

If Grace BFC is participating in an event in partnership with another organization, we will consider permissions given through that organization to also be valid for that event (for example, a retreat where the retreat center collects media permissions as part of its registration process).

Any person can request at any time that specific recordings of them not be used. The request should be given in writing, after which all efforts must be made to remove that recording from public use.

## **SECURITY RECORDINGS**

Grace BFC may at any time install video cameras and other recording devices for the purpose of securing our property and providing for the safety of those on our property. Those devices will be placed in public spaces, they will not be placed in bathrooms or similar spaces. They will also not be placed in such a way as to record conversations that would be considered confidential, such as within the pastor's offices. They may record other conversations on the property.

All people in the vicinity of our security devices will be recorded. Recordings shall be kept for a period of time determined by the Deacon security team based on common legal standards and best practices, after which they will be erased.

Access to the feeds from those devices shall be limited to those who need access for safety reasons, as determined by the Deacon security team. Recordings from those devices shall be used only for security and safety. No recordings, or portions of recording, captured through security devices shall be used for any other purposes, and they will not be posted in any publicly accessible location.

Security feeds may be provided to law enforcement when a situation requires it. Specific recordings involved in any legal proceedings may be kept indefinitely as evidence and may be released by legal authorities as part of their investigation.



# Guidelines for the Assimilation of Sunday Visitors

~ Guidelines revised by the Elders of Grace BFC Wallingford on March 19, 2019 ~

## REALITIES and CHALLENGES

- Assimilation of newcomers doesn't happen automatically, especially in churches larger than 100 where it is often assumed "someone else" is always connecting with newcomers
- The responsibility for assimilating newcomers rests with the church, not the newcomer
- Congregation members are more valuable than pastors in the assimilation of newcomers
- Assimilation is an ongoing process

## ASSIMILATION PLAN

- On the first Sunday
  - Greeted outside the door by our greeters
  - Connected to someone from the *Host Team* who informs them about our life and worship on Sunday mornings, helps them feel welcome and at home among us, is praying for them throughout the service, and is intentionally available to them until they leave
  - Encouraged to fill out an info card by the *Host Team* and the worship leader that day and offered opportunities to stay connected
  - Given a *Grace Card* with contact info and next step opportunities
- The Week following first visit
  - Prayed for by a member of the *Host Team*
  - If they have the potential to return again (i.e. not a one time out of town visitor) they are added to the Church Database as someone "*Under Care*", recording both the date of the first visit and *Host Team* member following up with them
  - Add to the Church Database *Pathway* for Visitors
  - Phone call/text/or email from someone on the *Host Team* expressing thoughts and prayers
- After a return visit
  - Called and/or visited by a pastor
- Throughout the first month
  - Sought out by the *Host Team* each week to follow up on previous conversations, help connect with other individuals from Church, and preserve the sense of welcome among us.
  - Encouraged to connect with another opportunities for building relationships (a small group, family night, special event, etc)
- Into the second month and after expressed interest in sticking around
  - Assigned to an elder
  - Invited into the home of their elder for dinner or dessert
  - Whenever care passes from original host team member to another Host Team Member, or to an Elder, the "*Under Care*" person in the church database should be updated (the "*under care*" date remains unchanged so it indicates first date of coming under care of Grace)
- During the first quarter
  - Invited for dinner at one of the Pastors' homes along with other newcomers from that quarter.
  - Informed of next session of *Grace Life 101*
  - Encouraged (assisted) to explore their giftedness and ways they might participate in mission at Grace

# **Guidelines for the Use of Church Facilities and Church Promotion for Fundraising or for Ministry or Personal Celebrations**

*~ Presented to the Elders by Pastor Mark, April 18, 2017 ~*

- **Generally Allowed Use of Gym on Sunday Mornings during Coffee Time / After Bible Classes**
  - Promotion / Sign-up for Grace sponsored events (ex. Celebration Service, Missions Conference)
  - Promotion of / distribution of literature for Grace sponsored / supported missionaries and ministries (ex. Love in Action initiative, CityTeam ministry, Young Life Color Run, Jen Lindemuth return to the Philippines)
  - Occasional opportunities to donate to / support people or ministries already sponsored by / supported by Grace (ex. Donate supplies for CityTeam food drive, donate coins in baby bottles for Delco Pregnancy Center, purchase ticket for Compassion Corps fund-raising concert) ... by occasional we mean both that any given organization or individual should only use this venue a few times a year, and that in any given month there should be some weeks without any fund-raising in gym so it does not feel that we are constantly asking for donations ... also everything needs to be no pressure, no guilt, etc.
  - Occasional special celebrations – either church sponsored (ex. 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Grace Church, welcome home of missionary) or Grace regular attendee sponsored (ex. special anniversary for a relative). Where it is the latter, set-up, tear-down and funding are the sole responsibility of the people hosting the celebration. In both cases anything in the gym over coffee time needs to be of a type and purpose that is appropriate for and open for the entire congregation to be a part of, and something that will not distract from the purpose of our coffee time which is general fellowship as well as welcoming of new people
  - Church Library
- **Generally Not Allowed Use of Gym on Sunday Mornings during Coffee Time / After Bible Classes**
  - Selling of merchandise
    - Exceptions – very occasional sale of something directly related to specific church objective (ex. Book recommended by the pastor as part of current emphasis, material from a guest speaker focused on the topic of the speaking)
  - Promotion of or raising funds for organizations or events not currently supported by or sponsored by the church
    - Exceptions – must be approved by the elders on a very rare case by case basis
  - Promotion of / raising funds for personal benefit (ex. Person should not promote and/or raise funds for own part in a missions team ... team or missions committee may

run a fund-raiser or promote, but individual cannot on own accord set up table to benefit themselves, their personal favorite ministry, or business)

- **Generally Allowed / not allowed Use of the Church Lobby**

- Same as the gym with the following exceptions
  - Anything needing personal interaction, greeting of featured person, or receiving of donations by a person should normally be done in the gym so as not to restrict traffic flow in the lobby
  - Direct fund-raising or anything involving exchange of funds / tickets / merchandise should normally be in the gym so that initial impression to members and guests on entrance to church is not that we are here to take their money

- **General Guidelines for Announcements from the Pulpit on Sunday Morning**

- Major church programs involving the entire congregation or large segments of the congregation may be offered brief announcement within the week or two prior to the event, with more details provided elsewhere (in print, online, in email)
  - Occasionally a particular event may be given a 3-5 minute ministry focus, subject to approval by the pastoral staff
- Notices of Congregational Meetings and other legally required notices to the congregation will be given from the pulpit for the number of weeks required
- Ministries and Missionaries the church sponsors or supports may be allowed a brief announcement within the week or two prior to an event, with more details provided elsewhere, provided any given ministry has a limited amount of touches in a given year
  - Occasionally a particular ministry or missionary may be given a 3-5 minute ministry focus, subject to approval by the pastoral staff
- Normally ministries and missionaries not sponsored by or supported by the church will not be given time in the pulpit unless specifically approved by the elders, often as part of some larger program (such as an outreach conference or the ministry of a guest speaker)
- Normally personally sponsored celebrations will not be promoted from the pulpit

- **General Guidelines for Promotion Through Print and Digital Media**

- Church Sponsored or Supported Ministries, Missionaries and Events are welcome to submit promotional materials for consideration to be printed in the monthly Grace News (detailed descriptions, articles and testimonies allowed), in the weekly emails in the week(s) immediately before the event (paragraph max), and if relevant to the entire congregation in brief (1 sentence) form in the weekly printed bulletin. The church reserves the right to edit or refuse due to space, or any other reason, any specific request

- Events, Celebrations and Ministries connected to an individual in the church rather than sponsored by the church may submit information for the monthly Grace News to be published in the “Grace Family” section. Things open to the entire church may also occasionally be noted in the email or bulletin in the week before the event, but there is no expectation that personally sponsored events will be advertised by the church
- Individuals or unofficial groups in the church may also choose to run personal fund-raisers or promotional events for ministries that the church sponsors or supports, or other worthy ministries in the area – these would be free to advertise in Grace News in the “Grace Family” section but would not be considered Grace sponsored events and not normally eligible for other promotion (ex. People holding a garage sale with proceeds going to missions, someone offering their professional services for a donation to a cause)
- **Decision Makers and Gatekeepers of all of the above**
  - Day to day decisions as to the use of the gym, lobby, pulpit, print and digital media for the promotion of events or use in fund-raising shall reside with the pastoral staff, with the Pastor of Discipleship and Outreach serving as the point person and gatekeeper
  - All questions as to the appropriateness of a particular requested use that is not obvious to the pastors based on these guidelines will be directed to the Board of Elders for their insight and, where needed, official approval. The Elders can modify these guidelines and approve or reject any specific requests entirely at their discretion.