



GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH of Millersburg

Constitution

Updated 2007

This Constitution defines what the Grace Brethren Church of Millersburg is.

ARTICLE I -- OUR NAME

The name of our church will be the Grace Brethren Church of Millersburg.

ARTICLE II – PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

Section 1 – Our Commitment

We are committed to ...

“Preach the Word,
Teach the Way, and
Reach the World”

with the Good News of Jesus Christ so that people can effectively connect with God, with each other, and with their world.

Section 2 – Why We Exist

We exist to honor God by bringing lives into harmony with Him and one another through:

- Worship... that is creative and inspiring;
- Instruction in God’s Word that is timeless and timely;
- Fellowship...that is vital and supportive; and
- Evangelistic outreach and ministry into our world.

Section 3 – Our Covenant

This is the covenant by which this church exists as a distinct body. It is our Biblical marching orders for every member and attender of our church, and our solemn pledge to one another and to God:

We do now, in the sight of God and invoking His blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as warranted by the Word of God, to...

- acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord,
- submit to the authority of the Bible as our rule of faith and practice,
- come together for Christian fellowship,
- enjoy the privileges of the Christian ordinances,
- meet together regularly in public corporate worship of God,
- seek the advancement of His church on earth,
- teach and preach the Word of God,
- submit ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of the church, and
- walk together in brotherly love.

This we do, depending on the aid of our Heavenly Father, who so loved the world that He gave His One and Only Son for our salvation; of Jesus Christ, Who redeemed us with His blood; and of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide.

ARTICLE III -- OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

The Statement of Faith which our church embraces, preaches and defends is as follows:

1) The Bible: the Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God [2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21].

2) The One True God: existing eternally as three Persons -- the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit [Luke 3:22; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14]

3) The Lord Jesus Christ: His preexistence and deity [John 1:1-3]; incarnation by virgin birth [John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23]; sinless life [Hebrews 4:15]; substitutionary death [2 Corinthians 5:21]; bodily resurrection [Luke 24:36-43]; ascension into heaven and present ministry [Hebrews 4:14-16]; and His coming again [Acts 1:11].

4) The Holy Spirit: His personality [John 16:7-15] and deity [Acts 5:3-4]; and His work in each believer: baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration [1 Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9]; filling [Ephesians 5:18]; empowering Christian life and service [Ephesians 3:16; Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:22-23].

5) Man: his direct creation in the image of God [Genesis 1:26-28]; his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death [Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12]; and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation [John 3:3-5].

6) Salvation: a complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone, received as a gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and His finished work [Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-19].

7) The Church: one true church, the body and bride of Christ [Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-32], composed of all true believers of the present age [1 Corinthians 12: 12-13]; and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for worldwide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in the fellowship and the work [Ephesians 4:11-16].

8) Christian Life: a life of righteousness, good works and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world [Romans 12:12], manifested by speaking the truth [James 5:12], maintaining the sanctity of the home [Ephesians 5:22-6:4], settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God [1 Corinthians 6:1-8], not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men [Romans 12:17-21], exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit [Galatians 5:22-23], and maintaining a life of prayer [Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6], including the privilege, when sick, of calling for the elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord [James 5:13-18].

9) Ordinances: the Christian should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ which are (1) baptism of believers by triune immersion [Matthew 28:19] and (2) the threefold communion service, consisting of the washing of the saints' feet [John 13:1-17], the Lord's Supper [1 Corinthians 11:20-22, 33-34; Jude 12], and the communion of the bread and the cup [1 Corinthians 11:23-26].

10) Satan: his existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people [Revelation 12:1-10], his judgment [John 12:31], and final doom [Revelation 20:10].

11) Second Coming: The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth [1 Thessalonians 4:16-17] before the tribulation [1 Thessalonians 1:10; Revelation 3:10], and

afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth [Revelation 19:11-20:6].

12) Future Life: The conscious existence of the dead [Philippians 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31], the resurrection of the body [John 5:28-29], the judgment and reward of believers [Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10], the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers [Revelation 20:11-15], the eternal life of the saved [John 3:16], and the eternal punishment of the lost [Matthew 25:46; Revelation 20:15].

This is the Statement of Faith of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, which we will follow as a corporate church body.

ARTICLE IV – THE BIBLICAL ORDINANCES AND PRACTICES WE OBSERVE

1) ORDINANCES

- **Baptism** – The church shall maintain the practice of believer’s baptism by triune immersion upon profession of faith, believing this to be the clear and consistent teaching of the New Testament.
- **Communion** – The ordinance of the three-fold Communion shall be observed at least twice each year on dates determined by the Pastor and the Board of Elders. This does not mean, however, that there may not be other suitable times for such observance, whether by the entire church, or by a smaller group within the church body.

2) PRACTICES

- **Anointing Service** – According to James 5:13-20, all believers may request the Elders of the church to anoint and pray for them when they are sick. Such a service shall always be performed with two or more Elders in attendance [James 5:14].
- **Dedication of Children** – We encourage parents to publicly dedicate their children to the Lord consistent with Matthew 19:13-16; Luke 2:22-23, and 18:15-16. This has no saving benefit for the children; instead, it is a time for parents to publicly dedicate themselves to the Lord for their task as parents, and for the congregation to dedicate themselves to assist parents and pray for them. These services are scheduled routinely for the benefit of our parents and families.
- **Commissioning Services** – In Scripture, people were set apart to God’s service by the laying on of hands and / or prayer [Acts 13:1-3]. We also commission (commit to mission) men and women for specific tasks and offices in the church, recognizing their commitment to service for the glory of God, and desiring God’s divine enablement for their duties.
- **Non-Combatancy** – We believe each individual must follow his own understanding of God’s Word. However, we stand ready to support any who, for conscience sake, are committed to military service as non-combatants [Romans 13:1-10], or who seek valid alternatives to serving in the military. We further believe that government service which may involve the bearing of arms (such as police officers, military, etc.) is not a violation of Biblical directives for the Christian [Romans 13:1-4].
- **The Holy Kiss** – We believe the “holy kiss” [Romans 16:16, et. al.] reveals the genuine love among believers and, while it may not be a common social custom here in the United States, it is entirely appropriate to kiss a fellow believer on the cheek during the footwashing service.

ARTICLE V -- OUR CHARTER

Section 1 -- Authority

A. The sole spiritual authority by which this church exists as an ecclesiastical body is received from God through the Holy Scriptures.

B. The human governmental authority are the laws of the State of Ohio under which it is incorporated.

C. We will operate in mutual counsel and cooperation with other churches that are affiliated with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

Section 2 -- Property

A. The title of the property of this church shall be vested in the corporate body of the Grace Brethren Church of Millersburg.

B. All property or assets owned by this local church and its auxiliaries shall be irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes.

ARTICLE VI -- MEMBERSHIP

The primary involvement of the individual in the church body is through membership. All members in good standing, sixteen years and older, are eligible to vote in all business sessions. Members are expected to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to Christian life, to participate in the communion ordinances, to be loyal to the church, to regularly attend services, to contribute and support the church and its outreach, and to share in its organized work.

ARTICLE VII -- GOVERNMENT

Section 1 – Meetings

Business meetings shall be held at least once annually, with other meetings being scheduled as needed. Special meetings may also be called as needed by contacting the Board of Elders and the Pastor.

Section 2 – Officers and Committees

A. Pastor – The Pastor shall be chosen according to the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. He shall provide leadership for the congregation and the Board of Elders, with his primary responsibilities being to edify the saints in accord with Ephesians 4:11-16; to preach and teach the Word of God; and to set a pattern of good works commensurate with his office.

B. Elders – Elders shall be chosen from the members of the church according to the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. They shall have general oversight of all matters of church life and practice, and shall ensure regular public services for worship, prayer and the observation of the Christian ordinances. The Board of Elders shall serve as corporate officers of the church.

C. Deacons and Deaconesses – Deacons and Deaconesses shall be chosen from the members of the church according to the qualifications of I Timothy 3:8-13. Their ministries shall be to assist the Elders, under the direction of the Board of Elders, in meeting the physical and spiritual needs of the members and attenders of this church, including outreach into the local community.

D. Trustees – Trustees shall be chosen from the members of the church according to the principles found

in I Corinthians 4:2 and Luke 12:41-44. Their ministries shall be to assist the Board of Elders, primarily in the area of care and maintenance of the church building and grounds.

E. Committees – Committees shall be appointed by the recommendation of the Pastor and Elder Board as the need arises.

Section 3 – OUR GOVERNING DOCUMENTS

This Constitution may only be amended, repealed or altered, in whole or in part, by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the membership at a duly organized meeting of the Church. Sufficient notice shall be an announcement from the pulpit on two (2) successive Sundays or two (2) insertions in the church bulletin of the full text of such proposed amendment.

Our Manual of Procedure defines those activities through which the concepts and principles of this Constitution will be implemented.