

GRASSROOTS Church  
**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS**

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

This church will be known as GRASSROOTS Church, Incorporated. This will be a non-profit corporation. This church is autonomous and maintains the right to govern its own affairs, independent of denominational control. Recognizing, however, the universal communion of followers of Christ and the benefit of a wider association, this church will be affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention in its local, state, and national expressions.

**ARTICLE II – BELIEFS**

The GRASSROOTS Church family stands in solidarity with the Bible (primarily) and the *Baptist Faith and Message of 2000* (secondarily). However, in an effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace, we, hereby, summarize the truths we believe to be essential to the integrity of the gospel as recorded and revealed in the Bible.

**GOD**

We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

**THE BIBLE**

We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

**THE HUMAN CONDITION**

We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

**JESUS CHRIST**

We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus, Israel's promised Messiah, was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

**THE WORK OF CHRIST**

We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

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**THE HOLY SPIRIT**

We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

**THE CHURCH**

We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

**CHRISTIAN LIVING**

We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

**CHRIST'S RETURN**

We believe in the personal, eminent, bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

**RESPONSE AND ETERNAL DESTINY**

We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance, trusting in Jesus Christ's death for sin and resurrection from the dead, and following Him in obedience. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world. At this time, the unbeliever will be eternally shut out from the presence of the Lord and the majesty of his power while the believer will be eternally present with God and the redeemed community in the renewed heaven and earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

**ARTICLE III – POSITION PAPERS**

In view of the ever shifting cultural landscape, the GRASSROOTS Church elders will be responsible to develop doctrinal position papers in order to bring further clarification and shape to our doctrinal beliefs and how we engage the world. GRASSROOTS Church covenant members (as detailed in Article VIII) agree to abide and submit to any developed positional papers in as much as they are in agreement with the Bible (primarily) and the *Baptist Faith and Message of 2000* (secondarily).

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**ARTICLE IV – MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY**

We believe that term “marriage” has only one meaning and that is marriage as sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture.

We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to only occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other. We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality, such as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, pornography or any attempt to change one's sex, or disagreement with one's biological sex, is sinful and offensive to God.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of the church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the church members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by the church in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, should abide by and agree to this Statement on Marriage and Sexuality and conduct themselves accordingly.

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with scripture nor the doctrines of the church.

**ARTICLE V – CORE VALUES**

1. **GOSPEL** :: Jesus rescues, redeems, restores and...
2. **COMMUNITY** :: forms us into a family of apprentices (disciples)...
3. **MISSION** :: living as missionary servants in the world.

**ARTICLE VI – COUNCIL**

The senior leadership of GRASSROOTS Church shall be vested in a governing board of elders and deacons, hereinafter referred to as the “Council,” which is composed of both paid and unpaid elders and deacons who follow the leading of Jesus who is the Good Shepherd of GRASSROOTS Church (1 Peter 5:1–4). Elders are to be selected by the current elders of GRASSROOTS Church and affirmed by the congregation. However, they must first engage in an evaluation period for the purpose of determining their theological, ministry, and character qualifications, as outlined in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. In addition, those selected must agree to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in 1 Peter 5. Once the evaluation has been completed, the man has been recognized as qualified, and he has agreed to fulfill the scriptural responsibilities, he will be presented to the congregation for the affirmation process. This process will be conducted over a one-month period, during which the congregation may raise any questions as to the candidate’s qualifications. Once the man has been confirmed by the congregation as being above reproach, he is then to be affirmed via congregational vote. For additional details on qualifications, selection, appointment, responsibilities, etc. of the elders and deacons, please see the position paper entitled “Elders and Deacons.”

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**ARTICLE VII – GOVERNANCE**

The Council may structure and organize however it deems necessary for the sake of simplicity, clarity of communication, and efficiency of organization, according to the needs of the church and the size of the Council. Council decisions are to be made by majority vote with a quorum of at least **2/3** present. GRASSROOTS Church elders and deacons possess 1 vote each.

To promote efficient handling of Council matters, the Council may appoint various committees from among covenant members and the church at large. These committees shall perform tasks solely in accordance with the duties and with powers specifically delegated by the Council and shall exist for the period specified by the Council. The general functions of committees are:

1. To bring carefully considered recommendations concerning specific ministries.
2. To provide a wider base of counsel involving the oversight of specific ministries.

**ARTICLE VIII – ANNUAL MEETING**

At the annual meeting of GRASSROOTS Church, the elders are required to submit a budget to the members of the corporation for approval. The GRASSROOTS Church elders may call other meetings of the congregation as deemed necessary.

**ARTICLE IX – COVENANT MEMBERSHIP**

1. **INTEGRATION:** Covenant membership is based upon the four points detailed below.
  - A. A confession of personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, and the testimony of believer’s baptism. Other covenant membership requirements (participation in the ROOTED course, required interviews, etc.) may be added as necessary as determined by the elders to maintain the health and purity of the congregation. Current requirements are detailed in the document entitled “Covenant Membership” within the “Getting ROOTED Course.”
  - B. An expressed desire to accept the responsibility of living a holy life, participating actively in service, giving generously and sacrificially to GRASSROOTS Church, and living a missional lifestyle. As such, covenant members of GRASSROOTS Church solemnly commit to covenant with GRASSROOTS Church to uphold our essential doctrines, participate in our core values, engage relationally within our structure, and pray for other believers within GRASSROOTS Church.
  - C. Agreement with and submission to the doctrinal outlook of GRASSROOTS Church.
  - D. Agreement with and signature of the GRASSROOTS Church membership covenant.
2. **VOTING:** The privilege of voting has particular limitations as detailed below.
  - A. Covenant membership within GRASSROOTS Church shall not vest in any member any proprietary rights in the Corporation, but shall only entitle the member to vote at a meeting of the covenant members on those matters specifically set forth in these ByLaws or that the Council chooses to submit to the covenant membership for affirmation and approval.
  - B. All matters shall be determined by a majority vote unless otherwise specified by the Constitution and ByLaws. In such cases, voting privileges are restricted to covenant members who are: in good standing, at least 18 years of age, and not currently under any disciplinary action.

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3. **REMOVAL:** Covenant members may be removed from covenant membership for the reasons detailed below.
  - A. Death.
  - B. Transfer of membership to another church. A letter is needed from the church to which you have transferred in order to properly remove you from membership.
  - C. In order to properly withdraw from membership, a written letter of intent is required with explanation of reasons submitted to the Council.
  - D. Dismissal by Church Discipline as outlined below in Article X.
4. **RESTORATION:** Members who are dismissed by the Council shall be restored by the Council when they deem it appropriate and reinstated according to the spirit of 2 Cor. 2:7-8.

**ARTICLE X – CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

Through God’s grace, the fourfold purpose of church discipline is:

1. **RECONCILIATION:** Repentance and restoration of the Christian.
2. **PROTECTION:** Shield the church from false teachers, wolves, and division.
3. **ADMONITION:** Deterring others from engaging in sinful attitudes, actions, and practices.
4. **MATURITY:** Conforming us individually and corporately to Christ as one unified body.

Covenant members of GRASSROOTS Church who err in doctrine or engage in conduct that violates scripture as determined by the Council, will be subject to appropriate church discipline. The application of church discipline shall be consistent with the biblical approach outlined in Mt. 18; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6; 1 Tim. 1, 5; and Tit. 3. While the Council oversees the disciplinary process described below, covenant members may be involved in the disciplinary process. Covenant members delegate authority to the Council to make the final decision in all disciplinary matters.

General categories of offenses in scripture that may result in church discipline include:

1. Unrepentant sin of a Christians (Mt. 18:15-18)
2. Sin not in keeping with our identification with Christ or Christian conduct (1 Cor. 5:11).
3. Divisive, heretical teacher (Tit. 3:10).

Matthew 18:15-17 outlines the approach to bring about reconciliation between individuals when offenses occur. If this is unsuccessful, then those who sought the offender’s repentance may come to the Council. The Council, in turn, is to follow the general procedures detailed in the position paper entitled “Church Discipline” in order to ensure order.

All covenant members agree that these church discipline methods shall provide the sole remedy for any dispute arising against the church and its agents, and they waive their right to file any legal action against the church in a civil court or agency. However, should an unresolvable dispute arise, a mediator may be appointed by the Council in order to seek reconciliation and unity following the guidelines detailed in the position paper entitled “Mediation.” Upon resolution or restoration, the Council may determine if additional biblical counseling is warranted. If so, refer to the guidelines detailed in the position paper entitled “Counseling.”

**ARTICLE XI – FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the corporation shall be January 1 – December 31. For additional financial and budgetary policies, see the document entitled “Financial Policies.”

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**ARTICLE XII – VOTING**

Covenant members do not constitute a legislative body, nor do they constitute members of the Corporation. Covenant members cannot vote, pass resolutions binding upon the Corporation, nor have any equity in the real property of the Corporation or rights to vote on its disposal, except as provided within these ByLaws or as specifically delegated by the Council. Said property of the Corporation is dedicated to religious and charitable purposes as outlined in the document entitled “Articles of Incorporation.” Congregational voting shall occur in the following instances and is limited to covenant members only:

1. The affirmation of the annual budget as developed and presented by the elders.
2. Significant changes in the budget exceeding 5% of the annual budget.
3. The affirmation of elder candidates from within GRASSROOTS Church.
4. The affirmation of deacon candidates from within GRASSROOTS Church.
5. The affirmation of a Lead Elder/Overseer/Shepherd of GRASSROOTS Church.
6. The purchase of land or real estate.
7. Amendments to the Constitution and ByLaws.

A quorum shall be necessary only in the case of the rejection of a budget, elder, lead elder, or purchase of land or real estate. A quorum is not necessary for a vote of affirmation. If a vote is taken resulting in the rejection of one of these items, an attendance record is to be taken. If the number of covenant members present is less than **50%**, the elders are to communicate in writing to all covenant members the result of the vote, and within **45 days**, designate a time for either:

- A. A second vote on the same issue, with the goal to have a quorum present at that meeting.
- B. A covenant membership meeting to present an alternative (in the case of a budget).

**ARTICLE XIII – EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

The corporation will not discriminate in employment policies for reasons of race, religion, or sex, except in those situations that are in clear disagreement with Scripture.

**ARTICLE XIV - RULES OF ORDER**

The current edition of the *Standard Code of Parliamentary Procedure* by Alice Sturgis shall be the parliamentary authority for all matters of procedure not specifically covered by these ByLaws.

**ARTICLE XV – AMENDMENTS**

The corporation may later amend, revise, add to, repeal or rescind these ByLaws and/or adopt new ByLaws at pleasure by a majority vote of all the covenant members of the corporation at any meeting of the corporation, provided that notice of the proposed alteration, amendment, revision, addition, repeal, or rescission of the ByLaws or adoption of new ByLaws shall have been given at least thirty days preceding the meeting.

**ARTICLE XVI – COMPENSATION**

No compensation shall be paid to elders unless a resolution authorizing such remuneration shall have been adopted by the corporation before services are rendered. The elders have the freedom to hire assistants or office staff without seeking congregational approval, but the congregation should be informed of such decisions. All staffing costs are reflected in the annual budget.