

BYLAWS FOR GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
5500 Mansfield Road
Arlington, TX 76017

1. FORWARD

It is possible for Christians to worship God in any place, for God is not confined to temples made with human hands. Christians also worship God in places set apart particularly to that end and in doing so they do not render the rest of creation less sacred, or the places of worship more holy. By using every gift of creation in God's service and to God's glory, they demonstrate more clearly in one place what is true in all places, that God is Lord of all creation.

To this end, we are covenanted together as members of Grace Presbyterian Church, Arlington, Texas, and have been incorporated by the State of Texas. Grace Presbyterian Church is a member of Grace Presbytery and is subject to The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A)(composed of the Book of Confessions and the Book of Order) to civil law, and to such goals and rules as are necessary to provide the right ordering of our corporate life.

All meetings of Grace shall be conducted in accordance with the rules set forth in The Constitution and The Book of Order where they apply, and otherwise, according to Robert's Rules of Order.

2. POLICY RULES

- 2.1. **Name and Location:** This congregation is known as Grace Presbyterian Church of Arlington and is located at 5500 Mansfield Road, Arlington, Texas.
- 2.2. **National Affiliation:** Grace Presbyterian Church, being a particular congregation affiliated with Grace Presbytery, recognizes The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A).
- 2.3. **Incorporation:** Grace Presbyterian Church, Arlington, Texas, has been incorporated in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas and the trustees of the corporation shall meet the requirements of the State of Texas.
- 2.4. **Adoption, Amendment, and Repeal, with dates:** The bylaws may be amended in whole or in part at a congregational meeting provided that notice of the proposed amendment has been given to the session in writing by the proponents and publicly announced to the congregation (per Section 3.8). The vote can only be to "amend as proposed". Upon a majority vote of a quorum, the action shall become effective immediately unless otherwise specified.
- 2.5. **Membership of Congregation:** There can be three types of members:
 - 2.5.1. **Baptized Member:** A person who has received the Sacrament of Baptism and who has been enrolled as a baptized member by the session, but who has not made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Such baptized members are entitled to the pastoral care and instruction of the church, and to participation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

- 2.5.2. **Active Member:** A person who has made a profession of faith in Christ, has been baptized, has voluntarily submitted to the government of this church, and is active in the church's work and worship. An active member is entitled to all the rights and privileges of the church including the right to participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to present children for baptism, to take part in meetings of the congregation, and to vote and hold office. Other conditions of active membership that meet the needs of the particular church and are consistent with the order and confessions of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) may be adopted by the session after careful study and discussion with the congregation.
- 2.5.3. **Affiliate Member:** An active member of another church of this denomination or of another denomination or Christian body, who has temporarily moved from the community where the church of active membership is situated, has presented a certificate of good standing from the appropriate governing body of that church, and has been received by the session as an affiliate member. An affiliate member is entitled to all rights and privileges of an active member except for the right to vote and hold office.
- 2.6. **Ruling Body:** Responsibility for the administration of all spiritual and corporate matters shall be lodged in the session, except where the Book of Order accords this to the ruling elder, the congregation, and its Nominating Committee, or to a higher governing body. The session shall consist of the teaching elder and elders in active service who will be known as ruling elders while serving on session. Trustees of Grace Presbyterian Church shall perform their duties as agents of the session and congregation.
- 2.6.1. **Number and Tenure of Serving Elders:** There shall be twelve ruling elders who shall be active members of Grace Presbyterian Church. Their term shall begin in January following their election, with ordination and installation to occur prior to their taking office. One third of the total shall be elected each year. They normally shall be elected for terms of three years and shall continue in office until their successors are elected and installed. The session shall elect a ruling elder annually to serve as clerk of session. Unexpired terms arising from death, resignation, or other cause shall be filled as promptly as practical by election at the annual or special congregational meetings. To each session, one youth elder may be elected to serve a one-year term from August 1 to July 31, if a qualified candidate is called by the congregation.
- 2.6.2. **Re-election of Serving Elders:** No ruling elder shall be elected for a term of more than three years, nor shall a ruling elder serve for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating more than six years. A ruling elder having served a total of six years shall be ineligible for re-election for a period of at least one year.
- 2.6.3. **Trustees:** There shall be three trustees who shall be active members of Grace Presbyterian Church. Their term shall begin in January following their election and installation to occur prior to their taking office. One third shall be elected each year. They normally shall be elected for terms of three years and shall continue in office until their successors are elected and installed. Unexpired terms arising from death, resignation, or other cause shall be filled as promptly as practical by election at the annual or special congregational meetings. The trustees shall elect from their

number, a Moderator, one of whose functions shall be to preside at various corporation meetings when necessary. Trustees as a whole shall be empowered to carry out the functions granted by the State of Texas to the corporation, and to report thereupon to the session

- 2.6.4. **Nominating Procedures:** Nominations for ruling elders and trustees shall be made by a representative nominating committee of active members of the church, which shall itself include both women and men, giving fair representations to persons of all age groups and of all racial/ethnic members of that congregation. Two members of the committee shall be designated by and from session. Each ruling elder will serve staggered two year terms with the senior member acting as moderator. Three members of the committee shall be elected from and by the congregation. The teaching elder shall be a member of this committee, serving ex-officio and without vote. The nominating committee shall be chosen annually and no member of the committee shall serve more than two years consecutively.
- 2.7. **Organizations of the Congregation:** As members of the congregation discharge their responsibilities and facilitate their work, they may want to establish or continue organizations not a part of the session. All organizations shall keep minutes of formal meetings, where appropriate, and shall report as required by session.
- 2.7.1. **Session Recognition and Direction:** Such organizations shall require recognition or authorization by the session and shall be subject to its direction and discipline. Withdrawal of approval shall automatically constitute disbandment of the individual organization.
- 2.7.2. **Oversight of Fund Collections:** Whenever the function of a Grace Presbyterian Church organization includes the collection or distribution of money, prior session approval shall be obtained. The session shall assure that practices are above reproach and the appropriate and regular reports are made to the session.
- 2.8. **Meetings of the Congregation:** There shall be a special meeting of the congregation each fall for the election of serving elders and trustees, and any other stated business. In January, the annual congregational and corporation meeting shall convene to hear end-of-the fiscal-year (January through December) reports on all aspects of the congregation's work; review the adequacy of the compensation of the teaching elder upon report of the prior review of the session; election of church officer nominating committee at-large representatives; and transact other business as appropriate. The teaching elder shall preside over the annual congregational and corporation meeting. Special meetings of the congregation may be called for specific purposes at other times of the year and such matters as have been stated in the call only by considered at these meetings. Adequate advance notice shall be given from the pulpit two successive Sundays preceding the meeting. The call of a special meeting shall specify the items of business to be considered. The clerk of session shall act as secretary.
- 2.8.1. **Voting Requirement:** All active members in good and regular standing, but no others, are entitled to vote at congregational meetings. Voting by proxy is not allowed. Ten percent of all active members or twenty-five members, whichever is greater, shall constitute a quorum and a majority vote shall prevail.

- 2.8.2. **Presiding Official:** The teaching elder shall be the moderator of all meetings of the congregation. If this is impractical, he or she shall invite, with the concurrence of the session, another teaching elder of Grace Presbytery to preside. When the church is without a teaching elder, the moderator of session, appointed by Presbytery, shall preside at all congregational meetings.
- 2.8.3. **Use of Ballots:** Ballot voting shall be used in every election where nominees exceed the vacancies, for the election of the teaching elder, when requested by three or more active members, and in every matter of importance where deemed prudent by the moderator.
- 2.8.4. **Majority Votes:** Nominees not receiving a majority of votes shall be voted upon by additional ballots, as required, until all vacancies have been filled.
- 2.8.5. **Tie Votes:** Ties shall be decided by ballot including only those nominees tied. Since a teaching elder is not a member of the congregation, she or he as moderator may not vote in the meeting of the congregation. As in all tie votes, the moderator shall put the question a second time. If there is a tie vote again, the motion is lost, except in the election of officers. When electing officers, balloting continues until a majority is reached.
- 2.9. **Pulpit Vacancy:** Whenever the pulpit of Grace Presbyterian Church is vacant or the requirement exists to call an associate pastor, the session shall, in consultation with Grace Presbytery's Committee on Ministry, and with not less than ten days public notice, call a congregational meeting to elect a pulpit nominating committee of at least seven members representative of the whole congregation, whose duty it shall be to nominate a pastor to serve as teaching elder to the congregation. The committee shall elect its own moderator.
- 2.10. **Meeting by Electronic Means.** The session, and any committee of session, may hold a meeting by telephone conference call or other electronic means in which all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other.

The notice of a meeting by electronic means conference must state the fact that the meeting will be held by electronic means and include all materials required for the meeting to be included in the notice. All materials required for the meeting must be distributed in advance to allow adequate review.

Sufficient notice must be given of such meetings to allow participants to review the motion and materials provided. Any member of the session or committee of session may request that the meeting be held in person and not via telephone. Should a member request this, the meeting will be scheduled as quickly as possible and the scheduled electronic meeting canceled.

Participation of a member on the conference call meeting constitutes presence of that person at the meeting. To ensure that each member's voice is heard, the following process will be followed:

- Attendance will be taken at the start of the call to determine the list of attending members.

- Following the introduction of any item or topic requiring a vote and prior to the question being called, attending members will be polled to make sure that they understand the question and if they have any questions or comments.
- After the question is called, attending members of the session or committee will be queried to make sure that their vote is accurately recorded.

2.11 Email Voting Policy for Conducting Official Session Business

Purpose: To provide guidelines for the use of email to conduct official session business.

Policy: Email is a communication medium. Communication occurs when information is shared and understood by all parties – sender(s) and receiver(s). In conducting business via email the following guidelines should be followed.

1. Any session member wishing to address an issue by email must first obtain approval and consent of the Moderator/Clerk.
2. If a member of session objects to discussing or voting on the topic via email, it will be pulled from discussion and addressed at the next scheduled or called Session meeting.
3. The business/issue shall be brought to the Moderator/Clerk, who then puts the matter before the full session body.
4. The email from the Moderator/Clerk that puts the issue before the whole body shall specify a window of time for discussion and vote. Votes will be accepted any time within the window but not after the window closes.
5. Email voting is to be used **only** for unforeseeable matters of a time sensitive nature that arise between regularly scheduled session meetings.
6. The individual(s) bringing the business before the session must provide clear, concise, thorough information related to the issue before the group. This would include but not be limited to the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of an issue.
7. Since session deliberations are open; all questions, comments and opinions should be sent to all – “reply to all” – members. Practice “active listening” and reflection to assure the original message and any reply is understood – state what you think you heard and ask for clarification before further response.
8. Be respectful of all points of view.
9. Be sensitive of others’ feelings. Since this is a print medium and others are unable to read your non-verbal cues make sure you convey your meaning and intention with carefully chosen words.
10. Prayerfully consider your position and send your vote to the Moderator/Clerk.
11. The Moderator/Clerk will tabulate the voting results and email them to the session when all votes are cast. A printed copy of the initial motion, any explanation and record of who voted will be kept with the official session records along with a printed copy of the voting results.
12. Regular quorum requirement applies.

Original Bylaws Date of Adoption:

Amended Bylaws Adoption: August 4, 1991

Amended Bylaws Adoption: January 19, 1997

Amended Bylaws Adoption: January 23, 2011
Amended Bylaws Adoption: January 29, 2012
Amended Bylaws Adoption: January 26, 2014