

GRACE CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GREATER MEMPHIS

By Law

(English Version)

“Here am I. Send me!”

Isaiah 6:8

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ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of this church shall be **Grace Chinese Christian Church of Greater Memphis**. The church is a legally registered nonprofit corporation in the State of Tennessee.

ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

The purpose of this church is to follow the teachings of the Holy Scriptures through:

- Public worship of the true God;
- Proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ;
- Promotion of Christian fellowship;
- Edification and spiritual growth of believers;
- Encouragement of personal evangelism; and
- Advancement of worldwide missions.

Through these ministries, the church seeks to proclaim and expand the Kingdom of God among all people, especially among Chinese people.

ARTICLE III: STATEMENT OF FAITH

Section 1. God

We believe in the one and only true God, eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is almighty, self-existent, eternal, and the Creator and Sustainer of all things. Through His creation—especially through humanity—His divine nature, holiness, righteousness, and love are clearly revealed, leaving all people without excuse.

Section 2. Jesus Christ

We believe that Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, became man through the incarnation. He died on the cross for the sins of the world, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Section 3. The Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth and the Counselor sent by the Father. He abides with believers forever, bears witness to Jesus Christ as Savior, teaches us the truth, and preserves our unity in Christ.

Section 4. The Holy Scriptures

We believe that the entire Old and New Testaments are divinely inspired by God. They testify to Jesus Christ as the Messiah and are the supreme authority and standard for our faith, conduct, and daily life.

Section 5. Salvation

We believe that God's salvation is granted to all who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ through His grace and righteousness. This salvation is to be proclaimed throughout the world.

Section 6. Baptism

We believe that baptism is an ordinance commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. Through baptism, believers publicly confess their faith in Jesus Christ before God the Father and all creation, and testify to their willingness to be united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

Section 7. The Lord's Supper

We believe that the Lord's Supper is observed in obedience to Christ's command, in remembrance of His death and of the New Covenant He established for us, until He comes again.

ARTICLE IV: ORGANIZATION

Section 1. Organization

This church shall be composed of its members. Except for the pastor and other church staff approved by the church to receive compensation, all ministries and services of the church shall be carried out voluntarily by its members.

Section 2. Denominational Relationship

This church is an independent church and is not affiliated with any denomination. It shall maintain independence in doctrine, administration, and finances. As part of the Body of Christ, however, it is willing to cooperate with other churches of like faith in the proclamation of the Gospel.

ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

Any person who has believed in and accepted Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior and who agrees with the church's Statement of Faith and Constitution may apply for membership. Accepted applicants shall be introduced to the congregation during a Sunday worship service and shall become official members.

Section 2. Admission to Membership

Upon recommendation by the Pastor and Deacon Board, believers may apply for membership through one of the following methods:

1. Baptism in this church.
2. Presentation of a letter of recommendation from another church of the same faith.
3. If neither of the above applies, a believer who has a credible testimony of regeneration, evidence of salvation, and has previously been baptized may apply for membership and be accepted.

Section 3. Voting, Recall, and Eligibility for Office

Unless otherwise specified in this Constitution, members must be at least eighteen (18) years old and have been members for at least one year before obtaining the right to vote, recall, or be elected.

Section 4. Termination or Removal of Membership

Membership shall be terminated or removed under any of the following circumstances:

1. Death.
2. Except for students temporarily away for study, members who move away and are unable to participate regularly in church activities for more than one year.
3. Written request by the member to terminate membership.
4. Members who leave in good standing may request a letter of transfer to another church.
5. Members whose conduct is inconsistent with Christian testimony and who, after repeated admonition, refuse correction, bringing reproach upon the Lord's name or harm to the church. Upon investigation and recommendation by the Deacon Board, membership may be removed by majority vote of the Membership Meeting.
6. Members who remain on the Inactive Membership List for more than two years.

Section 5. Inactive Membership

Members who fail to attend worship services for more than one year and who disregard pastoral or church care and encouragement may, upon recommendation of the Pastor and approval of the Deacon Board, be placed on the Inactive Membership List.

Inactive members shall not have the rights to vote, nominate, be elected, recall, or make motions.

Section 6. Restoration of Membership

Inactive members or others seeking restoration of membership must submit a written application and follow the same procedure required for new membership. One year after restoration, they may regain voting and election rights.

ARTICLE VI: PASTOR

Section 1. Duties

The Pastor is the spiritual leader of the church. The Pastor shall build up the Body of Christ, preach the Word of God and the Gospel, lead and supervise the ministries of the church, and fulfill all responsibilities pertaining to pastoral ministry.

Section 2. Calling a Pastor

When a pastoral vacancy exists, the church shall establish a Pastoral Search Committee to identify and recommend suitable candidates to the Deacon Board. Upon approval by both the Deacon Board and the Membership Meeting, a pastor may be called.

Notice of the meeting shall be given at least two weeks in advance in writing to eligible voting members and announced during two consecutive Sunday worship services.

A pastoral candidate shall be called upon receiving at least a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of valid ballots. Voting shall be by secret written ballot.

Section 3. Pastoral Search Committee

The committee shall consist of deacons and voting members as recommended by the Deacon Board. The Board shall determine the number of committee members as needed.

The committee shall elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson and shall recommend candidates to the Deacon Board, which shall then present them to the Membership Meeting.

Section 4. Compensation and Benefits

Pastoral compensation and benefits shall be determined by the Deacon Board according to individual circumstances and approved by the Membership Meeting before the call is extended.

Section 5. Dismissal

A pastor may be dismissed if:

1. He teaches contrary to biblical truth or this Constitution.
2. His conduct brings reproach upon the Lord or the church.
3. He fails to fulfill pastoral responsibilities.
4. The pastor and church are unable to continue serving together effectively.

A motion for dismissal may be initiated by the Deacon Board or by a petition signed by at least one-half of the voting members eligible for recall.

The reasons shall be investigated and verified. Every effort shall first be made toward reconciliation and restoration. If dismissal becomes necessary, the reasons shall be clearly explained to the membership.

Dismissal requires a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of valid ballots at a Membership Meeting. Voting shall be by secret written ballot.

The church shall provide written notice of dismissal.

Unless otherwise determined by the church, all responsibilities and relationships between the Pastor and the church shall terminate immediately upon issuance of the dismissal notice.

Section 6. Resignation

A Pastor who resigns shall provide at least sixty (60) days written notice.

Section 7. Renewal of Call

After the initial three-year term, the Pastor may be renewed upon recommendation of the Deacon Board and approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the eligible voting members at a special Membership Meeting.

ARTICLE VII: DEACONS

Section 1. Deacon Board

The Deacon Board shall consist of deacons. The number of deacons shall be determined as needed but shall not be fewer than three (3) nor exceed one-tenth (1/10) of the church membership. The Pastor may attend Deacon Board meetings.

Section 2. Qualifications

Deacons shall meet the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:3. They shall be devoted followers of Christ, willing to sacrifice for the Lord, possess a good testimony, demonstrate competence in service, and willingly serve others.

The office of deacon is open to both men and women; however, husband and wife may not serve simultaneously as deacons.

Candidates must have been baptized for at least two years and have been voting members of the church for at least one year.

The term of office shall be three years. A deacon may be re-elected once consecutively.

Section 3. Election

A. Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee shall be formed consisting of:

- The Pastor
- One deacon whose term is ending
- One current deacon
- Two voting members recommended by the Deacon Board

B. Petition Nomination

Additional nominees may be added by petition signed by more than one-tenth (1/10) of the voting members, with the nominee's consent.

C. Number of Candidates

The Deacon Board shall determine the number of positions needed. The Nominating Committee shall nominate accordingly.

D. Election Method

Deacons shall be elected on the church election date by secret ballot. Candidates receiving the highest number of votes and more than one-half of votes cast shall be elected.

Newly elected deacons shall assume office after installation on the first Sunday of the new year.

Section 4. General Responsibilities

The Deacon Board shall:

1. Meet monthly and as needed.
2. Work with the Pastor in planning, managing, coordinating, and promoting all church ministries.
3. Implement actions approved by the Membership Meeting.
4. Manage and maintain church property.
5. Obtain necessary insurance.
6. Not sell or mortgage church property without approval of the Membership Meeting.
7. Prepare and submit the annual budget.
8. Allocate church finances according to the approved budget.
9. Establish compensation and duties for paid staff.
10. Prepare agendas and supporting materials for Membership Meetings.
11. Appoint at least two auditors annually.
12. Fill vacancies occurring before the completion of a ministry term.

Section 5. Executive Officers

The Deacon Board shall elect from among its members:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Financial Secretary
- Property Manager

Additional positions may be created as needed.

The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson may not hold the same office. The Treasurer and Financial Secretary may not be the same person.

Duties

The Constitution details the duties of each officer, including leadership, record keeping, financial management, property stewardship, contract signing under Board authorization, and annual contribution reporting.

Section 6. Removal of Deacons

A deacon who fails to fulfill responsibilities or whose conduct violates Scripture or this Constitution may be subject to removal.

Removal may be initiated by the Deacon Board or by petition signed by one-half of the members eligible to recall.

Removal requires investigation and approval by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Membership Meeting.

ARTICLE VIII: MEETINGS

Section 1. Sunday Worship

The church shall hold worship services every Sunday and celebrate the Lord's Supper at least once each month.

Section 2. Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Membership Meeting shall be held after worship on the first Sunday of December.

The meeting shall:

- Introduce new leaders,
- Approve the annual budget,
- Review ministry progress,
- Present future plans, and
- Reaffirm the church's mission and vision.

Section 3. Regular Membership Meeting

A regular Membership Meeting shall be held after worship on the first Sunday of June unless canceled by recommendation of the Deacon Board due to lack of business.

Section 4. Special Membership Meeting

A special Membership Meeting may be called by the Pastor, the Chairperson, or by petition of one-third of the voting members.

Section 5. Notice

Unless otherwise specified, notice shall be given during at least two Sunday services before the meeting.

For special Membership Meetings, one Sunday notice is sufficient.

Section 6. Quorum

One-third of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum.

Section 7. Voting

Voting rights apply to ordinary church business.

Election, eligibility, and recall rights apply to the calling or dismissal of pastors and the election or removal of church officers.

Except where otherwise specified, motions shall pass by a simple majority. Members must vote in person; proxy, mail, telephone, electronic, or delegated voting is not permitted.

Members must be at least eighteen (18) years of age to exercise voting and election rights.

ARTICLE IX: FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year of the church shall begin on January 1 and end on December 31 of each year.

ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS AND INTERPRETATION

Section 1. Amendments

Amendments may be proposed by the Deacon Board or by petition signed by more than one-third of the members possessing election rights.

The proposal shall include the reasons for amendment and suggested changes and must first receive approval by a majority of those present at a Membership Meeting before being referred to the Deacon Board.

The Deacon Board shall appoint a Constitutional Revision Committee to process the amendment.

Final approval requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Membership Meeting.

Section 2. Interpretation

1. In the event of any discrepancy between the Chinese and English versions of this Constitution, the Chinese version shall prevail.
2. The Deacon Board shall be responsible for interpreting this Constitution.