

CONSTITUTION
of the
COVENANT GRACE CHURCH
SYRACUSE, UT

Adopted by the membership on .

Preamble

Since it pleased Almighty God, by His Holy Spirit, to call certain of His servants to unite here in 2020, for the worship of God and the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and He has sustained and prospered this work; and

Whereas we, the members of Covenant Grace Church, having searched the Scriptures under the guidance of His Spirit, have recognized the need to constitute ourselves to conform to His will for the Church in this age and prepare ourselves for greater efforts in His name;

Now therefore we, the members of Covenant Grace Church, do hereby organize ourselves to adopt this Constitution as our articles of governance, to be interpreted at all times to reflect the character of and bring glory to Jesus Christ, as revealed in the Holy Bible and articulated in the standards set forth in our confession of faith, the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689.

Article 1 – Name

The name of this church is: Covenant Grace Church.

Article 2 – Purpose

This church exists to make disciples to the glory of God by seeing Jesus and making him known.

This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through the ordinary means of grace – the preaching of the Word, observing the sacraments, prayer, gathering together for community and fellowship as fellow sojourners – and by engaging in evangelism in every arena of life.

Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ; and

Calling fellow churches to biblical faithfulness and purity through instruction and encouragement about the nature of the local church.

Article 3 – Membership

Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the elders deem appropriate.

Section 2 – Admission of Members

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be ordinarily, but not necessarily, recommended by the elders for admission and must be accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.

Section 3 – Duties and Privileges of Membership

Each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church who are members of this congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this congregation is governed by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Section 4 – On Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 1 Timothy 5: 19–20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5). The purpose of such discipline should be for the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined (see Proverbs 15: 5; 29: 15; I Corinthians 4: 14; Ephesians 6: 4; I Timothy 3: 4–5; Hebrews 12: 1–11; Psalm 119: 115; 141: 5; Proverbs 17: 10; 25: 12; 27: 5; Ecclesiastes 7: 5; Matthew 7: 26–27; 18: 15–17; Luke 17: 3; Acts 2: 40; I Corinthians 5: 5; Galatians 6: 1–5; II Thessalonians 3: 6, 14–15; I Timothy 1: 20; Titus 1:13–14; James 1: 22); For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them (see Proverbs 13: 20; Romans 15: 14; I Corinthians 5: 11; 15: 33; Colossians 3: 16; I Thessalonians 5: 14 [note this is written to the whole church, not just to leaders]; I Timothy 5: 20; Titus 1: 11; Hebrews 10: 24–25); For the purity of the church as a whole (see I Corinthians 5: 6–7; II Corinthians 13: 10; Ephesians 5: 27; II John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21: 2); For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians (see Proverbs 28: 7; Matthew 5: 13–16; John 13: 35; Acts 5: 1–14; Ephesians 5: 11; I Timothy 3: 7; II Peter 2: 2; I John 3: 10); and Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character (see Deuteronomy 5: 11; I Kings 11: 2; II Chronicles 19: 2; Ezra 6: 21; Nehemiah 9: 2; Isaiah 52: 11; Ezekiel 36: 20; Matthew 5: 16; John 15: 8; 18: 17, 25; Romans 2: 24; 15: 5–6; II Corinthians 6: 14–7: 1; Ephesians 1:4; 5: 27; I Peter 2: 12).

Section 5 – Termination of Membership

The church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and it shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by congregational vote. Additionally, the church may recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

Article 4 - Meetings

Section 1 – Worship Meetings

Worship services shall be held each Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

Section 2 – Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every six months, at some time apart from a public worship service agreed upon by the membership.

An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church.

The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Provided all constitutional provisions for notification have been met, a quorum shall be understood to be met by those members present. All votes shall be tallied based on the number of votes cast by members present.

A budget shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than three months after the start of the fiscal year. Congregational approval shall proceed, without amendment, as a single vote on the budget in its entirety. Prior to this approval and subject to the elders' discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant constitutional requirements have been met.

Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request, submitted to the elders, of five percent of the voting membership. The date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within two weeks preceding the meeting.

In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

Article 5 – Officers

Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders and deacons. All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

Section 2 – Elders

The elders shall be comprised of not less than two men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in I Timothy 3: 1–7 and Titus 1: 6–9. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Subject to the will of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6: 1–6 and I Peter 5: 1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God's flock.

The church shall recognize men gifted and willing to serve in this calling, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. This recognition shall be reaffirmed by the church triennially. An elder's term of office may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern to the elders and, if need be, to the congregation. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15–17 and I Timothy 5: 17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a two-thirds vote of the members at any members' meeting of the church. The elders shall take particular responsibility to

examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and committees, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions. Further, the elders should seek to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, affirm our fundamental gospel convictions and do not teach our church anything contrary to the Statement of Faith. The elders may establish ministry positions or committees to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid staff positions. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position. Each year the elders, after consultation with the deacons, the deaconesses, and the membership, shall present to the church an itemized budget. This budget shall be presented for discussion at a regular or specially-called budget meeting and called up for a vote at the following members' meeting. No money shall be solicited by or on behalf of the church or any of its ministries without the approval of the elders. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders' meetings and shall also elect one of their number to serve as moderator of members' meetings. For purposes of compliance with the nonprofit corporation laws of the state of Utah, the elders shall elect one of their number to serve as the president of the corporation.

Section 3 – Deacons & Deaconesses

The office of deacon is described in I Timothy 3: 8–13. The church shall recognize, in accordance with the constitutional provisions on elections, men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1-6, these members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons and deaconesses.

Deacons and deaconesses shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration.

The elders, with assistance from the deacons and deaconesses shall receive, hold, and disburse a fund for benevolence, reporting on its use to the elders at their request, and reporting to the church its total receipts and total disbursements only.

The deacons and deaconesses, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or committees of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Article 6 – Elections

Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;

Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;

All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;

The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Section 2 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, deaconesses shall be presented by the elders at the previous members' meeting

(providing that previous meeting occurred at least eight weeks prior), and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator.

The elders should seek recommendations and involvement from the general membership in the nomination process. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

The moderator shall declare elected all men receiving a two-thirds majority of all votes cast for the office of elder at a regularly-scheduled members meeting. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority of all votes cast; abstentions will not be considered as votes cast.

The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

Article 7 – Indemnification

Section 1 – Mandatory Indemnification

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was an officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive Indemnification

At the discretion of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3 – Procedure

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

Article 8 – Dispute Resolution

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18: 15–20, I Corinthians 6: 1–8), the church shall require its members to resolve ordinary civil disputes among themselves according to biblically based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. In the case of criminal activity within the congregation, the State has a God-given responsibility to protect the peace and security of its citizens that should be supported and encouraged. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall encourage the use of biblically based principles to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities.

Article 9 – Deviations of Practice

If a church member believes the church to be out of accord with this constitution, he or she should inform an elder. When the elders determine that the church is out of accord with this constitution, they must provide an update at each members' meeting until the situation is remedied.

Article 10 – Amendments

The Statement of Faith may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present and voting at a members' meeting, provided the amendment shall have been offered in writing at the previous members' meeting, and shall have been announced from the pulpit at church services two successive Sundays prior to such vote. The revised version of this constitution shall be made available to all church members.

Article 11 – Dissolution

In the event that the elders of the church determine that there is reasonable cause to dissolve the Covenant Grace Church as a corporate entity, the elders shall recommend dissolution to the membership. The elders shall call a special members' meeting as set out in Article 4, Section 2. Notice of the meeting shall be sent in writing to the membership no less than sixty days prior to the meeting. The notice shall state that the purpose of the meeting is to consider dissolution of the corporation and how the assets of the corporation will be distributed after all creditors have been paid. At least two-thirds of the members present at the meeting must vote in the affirmative to approve the proposal of dissolution.

After approval of dissolution by the members, all of the corporation's debts shall be fully satisfied. None of its assets or holdings shall be divided among the members or other individuals, but shall be irrevocably designated, as approved by a simple majority of the members present at a members' meeting, to one or more religious organizations which meet the qualifications described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and which are in agreement with the letter and spirit of the Statement of Faith. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of exclusively for such exempt purposes by a court of competent jurisdiction where the principal office of the corporation is then located.