

**CONSTITUTION
OF
GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

**of
Redding, California**

**Adopted unanimously
November 16, 1997**

Table Of Contents

<u>ARTICLE I</u>	Name and Object
<u>ARTICLE II</u>	Doctrinal Standards
<u>ARTICLE III</u>	Self Determination
<u>ARTICLE IV</u>	Members, Catechumens, and their duties.
<u>ARTICLE V</u>	Discipline
<u>ARTICLE VI</u>	Elections
<u>ARTICLE VII</u>	Calling of the Pastor
<u>ARTICLE VIII</u>	Election and Service of Elders and Deacons
<u>ARTICLE IX</u>	The Board of Elders
<u>ARTICLE X</u>	The Office of Pastor
<u>ARTICLE XI</u>	Licensure of Teachers in the Congregation
<u>ARTICLE XII</u>	Deacons and their Duties.
<u>ARTICLE XIII</u>	Board of Trustees
<u>ARTICLE XIV</u>	Committees of the Congregation
<u>ARTICLE XV</u>	Schools for Christian Education
<u>ARTICLE XVI</u>	By-laws
<u>ARTICLE XVII</u>	Amendments and Ratification

ARTICLE I

Name and Object

Section 1

The name of this congregation shall be GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH of Redding, California.

Section 2

The object of this congregation shall be the glory of the Triune God of Scripture through our Lord Jesus Christ by corporate and personal obedience to his holy, infallible and inerrant Word, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

This obedience shall be accomplished by the means of:

- a. the regular and faithful attendance to the preaching and teaching of the Gospel, meaning thereby the whole counsel of God, as found in the Holy Scriptures.**
 - b. the administration of the two Sacraments of Covenant Baptism and the Lord's Table.**
 - c. the proper use of Christian nurture, encouragement and discipline in the oversight of the people of God.**
 - d. and the evangelization of the nations by the appointed Biblical means.**
-

ARTICLE II

Doctrinal Standards

Section 1

The doctrinal standard of this Church is the Word of God as preserved in the Masoretic Hebrew text of the Old Testament and in the Traditional Greek text of the New Testament commonly known as the "Textus Receptus" or "Ecclesiastical Majority Text."

Section 2

Translations based upon these sacred texts shall be given preeminence in the ministries of this congregation.

Section 3

The Westminster Confession of Faith, with the Larger and Smaller Catechisms shall be the subordinate standards, confession of faith, and tools for instruction in this congregation.

Section 4

Other reformed confessions in agreement with the Word of God and the subordinate standards of this Church may also be used in the teaching and preaching ministries of this congregation.

ARTICLE III

Self Determination

Section 1

No section in this constitution or any amendments to it shall be understood to deny this congregation the right to sever its relationship with any ecclesiastical body or association with which it may be or come into association, at its own discretion, by the majority vote of the Board of Elders without further appeal or reference, should they believe such action to be necessary for the good of the congregation.

Section 2

All ordinances, rules, laws, or statutes of any larger judicatory with which this congregation may be associated now or in the future shall not be in force in this congregation unless the Board of Elders and the congregation have accepted them by regular vote.

Section 3

At no time shall any title, deed, or possession to any real property owned by this congregation be held by, ceded, sold, or given in any manner, to any other organization, ecclesiastical body, judicatory, or denomination, without the prior approval and majority vote of the Board of Elders and congregation of this Church.

ARTICLE IV

Members, Catechumens, and their duties.

Section 1

All persons who have been received into the membership of this congregation by approval of the Board of Elders and not excluded by an act of discipline shall be considered members in good standing of this Church.

Section 2

Children born to the members of this Church, or permanently legally adopted by them, or otherwise under their permanent care, shall be considered members of God's visible covenant people and this congregation, and proper subjects for the Sacrament of Baptism, though not permitted to partake of the elements of the Lord's Table until such time as they shall have been admitted to it by the rite of Confirmation.

Section 3

Confirmed members in good standing of this congregation who have attained the age of sixteen years or older shall alone be allowed to vote in this Church.

Section 4

It is the duty of every member of this Church faithfully to attend to the means of grace. This is to be done:

- a. by regular and faithful attendance at the meetings of this Church with joyful and hearty participation in the worship services each Lord's Day, unless providentially hindered from attending by sickness or other necessities.**
- b. by diligent study of the Holy Scriptures, publicly, privately, and in our families.**
- c. by constant regular prayer, in private, in our families, and in the corporate gatherings of the Church.**
- d. by participation in the administration of the Sacraments in the public gatherings of the Church.**
- e. by members who are parents presenting their infant children promptly for the Sacrament of Holy Baptism, and instructing them in the articles of the Christian Faith.**
- f. and by the cheerful giving of tithes and offerings for the maintenance of the ministries of the Church, support of Missions, and relief of those members of the body of Christ who may suffer physical and material needs.**

Section 5

Persons who are not members of this Church but who are professing believers and in regular attendance shall be considered catechumens of this Church, subject to its government and discipline and the objects of its nurture, protection and Pastoral care, though not possessing the privileges of full Church membership.

Section 6

A baptized catechumen may obtain the privilege of full Church membership after a period of instruction by making a public profession of faith, or by transfer and reception of a letter of membership from another evangelical Christian Church.

Section 7

Catechumens who have previously been biblically baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and confirmed by profession of personal faith in Christ in another Christian congregation shall not be rebaptized, and shall be welcomed and admitted to participation in the Lord's Table, unless barred for either doctrinal or moral reasons by the Board of Elders of this Church.

Unbaptized catechumens may attain the privilege of full Church membership after a period of instruction by making a public profession of faith and being baptized.

Section 8

Catechumens may not vote nor hold office in this Church, but may serve as non-voting members of the congregation's committees.

ARTICLE V

Discipline

Section 1

Any member or catechumen who shall give public offence, either by manner of life, or by holding or promoting false doctrines, shall be subject to the discipline of this Church as administered by the Board of Elders.

Section 2

The types of discipline shall be:

- a. Admonition**
- b. Public rebuke**
- c. Temporary suspension from the Lord's Table**
- d. Judicial erasure**
- e. Excommunication**

Section 3

Any member or catechumen brought under discipline by suspension from the Lord's Table, public rebuke, or excommunication may request in writing to have the charges presented to him in writing.

Section 4

Restoration of the offending person shall be by an act of the Board of Elders based upon the evident repentance of the offender.

Section 5

Members in good standing of this Church wishing to unite with another evangelical Church may have a letter of dismissal sent to the Church they wish to join upon their request.

Members of this congregation who move away, or who otherwise lose contact with the Church, or who unite with another Congregation without requesting a letter of dismissal, if no discipline was pending against them, may be removed from the membership rolls by the Board of Elders by Administrative Erasure. Administrative Erasure shall not be considered an act of discipline.

No letter of dismissal shall be sent to any Church which is apostate and denies the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in Scripture, or to any Church which holds membership in an apostate denomination.

Section 7

The Secretary of the Board of Elders shall keep an accurate list of the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the members and catechumens of this Church.

ARTICLE VI

Elections

Section 1

Confirmed members in good standing in this congregation who have attained the age of sixteen years or older shall alone be allowed to vote in the congregational meetings of this Church.

Section 2

The congregational meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the Holy Bible and the general principles of parliamentary law as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 3

A quorum for a congregational meeting shall be either one third of the voting membership or ten persons who are voting members in good standing, whichever is the less.

Section 4

An annual meeting of the Church shall be held within the first half of each calendar year.

The Pastor shall serve as moderator. If he is unable or unwilling one of the other members of the Board of Elders shall serve as moderator.

The Secretary of the Board of Elders shall serve as secretary for the congregational meetings, and shall keep a written record of the proceedings.

Section 5

Other meetings of the congregation may be called at other times by the Board of Elders during the year, provided the congregation is notified at least three Sundays prior to the meeting by announcement from the pulpit in the regular meetings of the Church, and that the meeting be held within six weeks of the first public announcement.

Section 6

The Board of Elders may call a congregational meeting upon shorter notice as long as at least three fourths of the voting members have been personally contacted as to the time, place and agenda of the meeting, and a reasonable attempt has been made to contact and notify all other members.

Section 7

All voting in this congregation shall be by show of hands, unless a ballot vote is requested by a majority of the members present at a congregational meeting, or majority vote of the Board of Elders.

Section 8

Unless otherwise designated by this constitution all elections and issues shall be determined by a majority vote of those members present and voting in the meeting.

ARTICLE VII

Calling of the Pastor

Section 1

Should the pulpit become vacant the Board of Elders shall seek qualified candidates to present to the Church.

Section 2

Only one candidate at a time shall be considered.

Section 3

A two-thirds vote by show of hands of the voting members present and voting at a duly called Congregational meeting shall be needed to approve a call to the Pastorate, after which vote the Board of Elders shall extend a formal call to the candidate.

Section 4

Only men (males) who agree to the following shall be eligible to serve as Pastors of this Church:

- a. that they do uphold and believe the doctrine of the inspiration, infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures.**
- b. that they receive and believe the creeds and subordinate doctrinal standards of this congregation to be true and in agreement with the Holy Scriptures.**

Section 5

If the Pastor should desire to resign he shall present his letter of resignation to the Board of Elders, which shall take action on it as soon as possible. If the Pastor or the Board of Elders so desire, the resignation shall be presented to the congregation for action. A majority vote of the members present and voting by show of hands shall be necessary to confirm the resignation.

Section 6

The Pastor shall be elected for an indefinite period of time.

ARTICLE VIII

Election and Service of Elders and Deacons

Section 1

The Elders and Deacons shall be ordained for life upon good behavior and may be removed from active duty by the majority vote of the Board of Elders.

Section 2

All nominations for the offices of Elder or Deacon shall be made by the Board of Elders, or until there is a Board of Elders, by the governing committee of the congregation.

Section 3

Elders shall serve in active office for three years and may be reelected for active duty by nomination from the Board of Elders and majority vote of the congregation.

Section 4

No more than fifty percent of the active Elders shall ever be voted upon for reelection at a congregational meeting. If more than fifty percent of the active Elders come up for reelection at the same time the nominations shall be divided into two meetings to be held within one month of each other, the order being determined by the birth dates of the nominees, the oldest Elders going first. Those nominees awaiting the next meeting shall remain active until the vote of the congregation.

Section 5

No Elder may vote on his own nomination in the Board of Elders or in the congregational meetings of the Church.

Section 6

The Congregation may vote on several nominees in a meeting but shall vote on each nominee individually.

Section 7

Deacons shall hold active office for two years, after which time they must be renominated to active service by the Board of Elders and be voted on by the congregation.

Section 8

All nominations for election or reelection to the offices of Elder or Deacon shall be made by the Board of Elders.

Section 9

Elections shall be determined by a majority vote of those members present and voting.

Section 10

Elders and Deacons are to be publicly ordained and installed into their offices as soon as possible after their election.

Section 11

Ordained Elders and Deacons reelected to active service shall not be reordained, nor shall they lose their ordination if and when they resign or go inactive from office.

Section 12

All nominees must be adult males in full communion with this congregation, and agree that the system of doctrine found in the subordinate standards of this Church are in harmony with the Scriptures and represents their own personal belief.

Section 13

The officers of this Church shall be required to conduct themselves in accordance with the descriptions of their offices found in Scripture.

Section 14

It shall be the duty of the members of the Board of Elders (the Pastor and the active Elders) to shepherd, encourage, watch over, and if needed admonish one another for their mutual edification, comfort, and safety for the sake of Christ's flock under their care.

Section 15

If at any time this congregation is without a Board of Elders a governing committee shall be nominated and elected by the congregation to handle its business.

ARTICLE IX***The Board of Elders*****Section 1**

The Pastor and Elders actively serving in office shall constitute the Board of Elders of the Church.

Section 2

No decisions of any board or committee of this congregation shall be considered effective without the prior approval of the Board of Elders.

Section 3

The Board of Elders shall be responsible for the general oversight and care of the Congregation and its organizations. The Pastor shall be moderator of the Board of Elders. If he is unwilling or unable to serve as moderator the Board of Elders may choose another of themselves to preside. A majority of the members of the Board of Elders present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4

The Board of Elders shall meet no less than once each quarter, after all members of the Board of Elders have been notified by the Secretary or Pastor in advance as to the time and place of the meeting. They shall annually audit the Treasurer's books, and prepare the annual budget to be submitted to the congregation for approval.

Section 5

The Board of Elders shall not transact any business in the improvement or erection of buildings, or sale of property, involving a sum of more than \$5,000.00, unless so instructed by the congregation.

Section 6

Only the Pastor and active Elders may vote in the Board of Elder meetings.

Neither Deacons nor laymen shall vote in the Board of Elder meetings of the Church, though they may, with the Board of Elders' consent, be present at such meetings.

Section 7

At one of the first meetings of each calendar year the Pastor shall appoint a Secretary and a Treasurer for the Board of Elders for that year.

Section 8

The Secretary shall keep a written record of the actions of the Board of Elders and handle the correspondence of the Church.

Section 9

The Treasurer shall keep a written record of the finances of the Church, and be responsible for the financial disbursements of the Church.

Section 10

It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders of the Church to assist and support the Pastor as the Minister of the Word in his labors and to assist the Pastor in the spiritual oversight and discipline of the Church.

Section 11

All records and correspondence of the Board of Elders dealing with discipline matters shall be confidential, except by vote of the Board of Elders.

Section 12

The Board of Elders is to examine prospective members and with the Pastor's prior approval receive them into the membership of the Church.

ARTICLE X

The Office of Pastor

Section 1

The duty of the Pastor shall be:

- a. to preach the Word of God in all its purity and soundness.**
- b. to thereby declare the whole counsel of God, both publicly and privately.**
- c. to order the liturgy, public worship, and pulpit ministries of the Church, according to the Scriptures and historic Reformed and Presbyterian usage.**
- d. to administer the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Table.**
- e. to encourage and work with the parents of the congregation so that they may prepare their children for the rite of Confirmation.**
- f. to develop, with the help of the other Elders and members of the congregation, a ministry of evangelism and outreach to the general population outside the Church, for the purpose of discipling new converts into its fellowship and the planting of new congregations.**
- g. to encourage and instruct the Catechumens in this congregation so that in time they may assume the duties and enjoy the privileges of full Church membership.**

Section 2

The office of Pastor is that of a teaching Elder (or Presbyter), neither superior nor inferior to the other active Elders (Presbyters) in office and responsibility, though differing in administration and duty. He is therefore equal in office and authority with the other Elders, and as such he is accountable, the same as they (both teaching and ruling Elders), to the other Elders of the congregation, and subject to the discipline of the Church through the proper channels and courts.

Section 3

In conjunction with the Board of Elders of the Church he is to administer Christian discipline and to take heed to himself and to all the flock under his care.

Section 4

The Pastor shall be a voting member and the moderator of all boards and committees of this congregation. If he declines or is unable to serve as moderator he shall appoint another member to serve as such.

ARTICLE XI

Licensure of Teachers in the Congregation

Section 1

The Board of Elders may license qualified and gifted men (males) who are members in good standing in this Church to exhort and teach the Scriptures under the supervision of the Pastor.

Section 2

The Board of Elders shall examine those men who desire such license to exhort, and upon the Pastor's prior approval they shall be licensed for a period of time, not to exceed two years. At the end of each two year period the license may be renewed upon approval of the Pastor.

Section 3

Those men who are licensed to exhort shall submit annually at the end of each calendar year a written report of their studies and labors to the Board of Elders.

Section 4

Those men licensed to exhort may not administer the Sacraments.

ARTICLE XII

Deacons and their Duties.

Section 1

It shall be the duty of the Deacons to co-operate fully with the Pastor and Board of Elders of the congregation:

- a. to promote its general welfare.**
- b. to gather the tithes and offerings of the Church for the relief of the poor and the necessities of the congregation.**
- c. to distribute the alms of the Church to those in need.**
- d. to provide for the salary of the Pastor or any other paid workers of the congregation according to the Church's temporal contract with them.**

Section 2

The Deacons form the Board of Deacons and are directly accountable to the Board of Elders of the congregation. They must inform the Board of Elders of the Church in advance of their meetings.

Section 3

All decisions of the Board of Deacons must be approved by the Board of Elders prior to being in effect.

ARTICLE XIII

Board of Trustees

Section 1

The Board of Elders shall serve as a Board of Trustees who shall have the care of the property of the congregation as a sacred trust.

ARTICLE XIV

Committees of the Congregation

Section 1

The committees of this congregation shall be:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| a. Evangelism & Advertisement | f. Sunday School & VBS |
| b. Youth & Youth Camp | g. Missions |
| c. Diaconal & Care | h. Hospitality |
| d. Ladies of the Church | i. Music and Choir |
| e. Fellowship & Welcome | j. Worship Preparation |

Section 2

Other committees may be formed with the approval of the Board of Elders as needed in the ministries and life of the congregation.

Section 3

All committees of the congregation shall function under the oversight and approval of the Board of Elders and shall submit annual reports of their activities and proposed budgets for the coming year to the Board of Elders.

Section 4

Members of the committees shall be volunteers chosen annually by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE XV

Schools for Christian Education

Section 1

It shall be the responsibility of the Board of Elders to promote the Christian education of the covenant youth of the Church and to promote the training of candidates for the ministry on a seminary level.

Section 2

The Board of Elders shall serve on the board of any school or seminary under the auspices of this Church.

Section 3

The Board of Elders shall examine any prospective teachers and administrators of the Church schools as to their

background, education, experience, orthodoxy and Christian morality.

Section 4

No one may serve as a teacher or administrator in the Church schools without the prior approval of the Board of Elders.

Section 5

All teachers and administrators in any school, college, or seminary under the auspices of this Church shall annually publicly affirm, without mental reservation or equivocation, their adherence to the infallibility and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures and the faith of the Church as expressed in the three historic ecumenical creeds, commonly known as the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian Creeds, and their general agreement with the subordinate doctrinal standards of this congregation.

ARTICLE XVI

By-laws

Section 1

The Board of Elders may from time to time enact such by-laws as conditions and the welfare of the congregation may require, provided that they do not conflict with the Scriptures or this constitution. All such by-laws shall be in writing and entered into the records of the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE XVII

Amendments and Ratification

Section 1

Amendments to this constitution may be presented to the congregation by the Board of Elders for vote at a meeting duly called for that purpose, provided that no less than three weeks written notice of the proposed changes shall have been publicly posted and read in the Church.

A majority vote of the members present and voting by show of hands shall be necessary to approve amendments to this constitution.

Section 2

This congregation reserves to itself the right to revise, alter, or amend this constitution, in part or in whole, without reference to, permission or sanction from, any other judicatory, committee, or higher denominational assemblies of the Church.

Section 3

No constitution, rules, or by-laws of any denomination or association with which this congregation may come into affiliation or association shall at any time supersede or nullify any articles or sections of this constitution without this congregation's prior vote and approval through the appointed process of amendment in this constitution.

Section 4

This constitution shall become the sole and binding constitution of this Church, superseding any and all others, upon its adoption by a majority vote of the members present and voting by show of hands at a duly called congregational meeting for that purpose.

Section 5

Upon its ratification all current members and new members received in the future must sign a copy of this constitution before being allowed to participate in the congregational meetings of this Church.

THE END