



2022

CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS

In the following document we have endeavored to honor the Lord Jesus Christ and His Church as well as honor one another. We hold that God's Word is our authority and guidance for every facet of life and therefore purpose to be a local church fellowship that is Holy Spirit empowered, Elder led and congregationally affirmed.

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CONSTITUTION OF GRACEPOINT CHURCH OF EPHRATA

Article I – Name, Organization, and Incorporation

- This incorporated church will be known as “First Baptist Church of Ephrata” DBA “GracePoint Church”
- The organization shall be organized as a nonprofit corporation under the laws of the State of Washington.
- This church was organized on Sunday, October 5, 1947.
- This church was incorporated in the State of Washington, No. 109623.

Article II – Purpose

GracePoint exists to display the glory of God in Christ Jesus.

Article III – Doctrine

The church’s doctrine will conform with the Word of God. That doctrine is summarized in our “Elder Affirmation of Faith.”

Article IV – Ordinances (refer to the *Elder’s Affirmation of Faith* document)

Section 1 – Baptism

As expressed in the statement of faith, baptism is for believers and is a public testimony of faith in Christ in obedience to His command. Baptism identifies the believer with Christ’s death and resurrection. This church will baptize by immersion in water after a person professes faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

Section 2 – Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper will be served on a regular basis. Any person professing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior may participate.

Article V – Statements of Faith

Section 1 – Tier 1: Elder Affirmation of Faith for Elders, Deacons, Teaching Faculty, and Missionaries.

Section 2 – Tier 2: Abbreviated Affirmation of Faith for Membership at GracePoint Church.

Tier 1 Elder Affirmation of Faith for Elders, Deacons, Teaching Faculty & Missionaries

GRACEPOINT CHURCH OF EPHRATA ELDER AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

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Preface: The Origin of This Document

This Affirmation of Faith originated at GracePoint Church of Ephrata, Ephrata, Washington, as the Elders (Overseers)¹ saw the need to define what they believe and teach for the clarity and continuance of Biblical faithfulness in the church. Over the time period of 2006-2008 the Elders met to pray, study, discuss and formulate this doctrinal statement of what we believe and why we believe it.

We rejoice that God has led us as a church and a ministry to embrace a vision of himself and his work that will guard us and help us spread a passion for his supremacy in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.

Purpose of This Document

GracePoint Church of Ephrata Elders have affirmed this Elder Affirmation of Faith and are to be held accountable to maintain it through life and doctrine. As the Summation of this Affirmation states, the aim of this document is to preserve the unity of the church through sound doctrine. In the words of the Affirmation,

“We believe that the cause of unity in the church is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries.” This document, then, and the team of Elders’ adherence to it aims to preserve the unity of the church through a commitment to Biblical truth.

Preamble

The teaching of GracePoint Church of Ephrata is based on the Scriptures. Our statement of faith reflects those doctrines that the Elders and congregation consider essential to understanding, teaching, and practicing God’s Word and is based on an interpretation of the Scripture that is:

1. **Normal** - understanding the words of Scripture in their common usage unless otherwise indicated by the context.
2. **Literal** - understanding the meaning of Scripture in its ordinary sense unless the context requires a figurative interpretation.
3. **Grammatical** - using the recognized rules of grammar to interpret the text.
4. **Historical** - understanding the words of Scripture in the context of the times in which they were written.
5. **Systematic** - categorizing and comparing the teaching of the Scriptures with the whole of Scripture in view.

As Elders of GracePoint Church of Ephrata, we believe and affirm that this statement of faith reflects the truth of God’s Word.

¹ The designation, “Elder” refers to the office of spiritual leadership in the local church. The term “Overseer” (giving oversight) describes the activity of the Elder in the local church. Both terms are used interchangeably in this document. See Article 9 for further explanation.

Article 1. Revelation, Scripture, and Authority

We believe that God is revealed in creation, in the Holy Scriptures, and in Jesus Christ, the apex of revelation. The Scriptures, all sixty-six Old and New Testament books, are divinely authoritative in all they affirm. (Ps. 19:1-6; Heb. 1:1-2; John 17:17)

We believe that all the Scriptures center about the Lord Jesus Christ in His person and work in His first and second coming, and hence that no portion, even of the Old Testament, is properly read, or understood, until it leads to Him. We also believe that all the Scriptures were designed for our practical instruction (Mark 12:26, 36; 13:11; Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:39; Acts 1:16; 17:2-3; 18:28; 26:22-23; 28:23; Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 2:13; 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21).

We believe in the verbal, plenary² inspiration of Scripture.³ This means the Holy Spirit dynamically superintended the verbal expressions of the human authors of Scripture so that the very thoughts God intended were accurately penned in the wording of the original manuscripts. (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21; 1 Cor. 2:13)

We believe the Scripture is inerrant⁴ as to fact and infallibly⁵ trustworthy as to truth, and should be interpreted in context to ascertain each author's intended meaning. Our present Bible continues to bear the final authoritative instruction of God for the church and the world. (John 10:35b; Ps. 19:7; Matt. 5:17-18)

We believe that God's intentions, revealed in the Bible, are the supreme and final authority in testing all claims about what is true and what is right. In matters not addressed by the Bible, what is true and right is assessed by criteria consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

Adopted by Elders, 20 March 2006

Article 2. The Godhead ("Tri-unity")

We believe in one only and true God who is perfectly complete and the sole object of our worship. This one God has always existed in eternal relationship as three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who, possessing the same divine attributes, are coeternal and coequal identical in substance (essence) but executing distinct yet harmonious subsistence (necessary existence). (Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 6:8; Matthew 28:19; John 1:1-4, 14, 10:30; 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 John 5:7; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 1:4-6)

Adopted by Elders, 20 August 2007

² *verbal, plenary* "This influence of the Holy Spirit over the writers of Scripture extended beyond the thoughts to the selection of the very words which the authors chose. Yet this influence of the Holy Spirit did not amount to a verbal dictation. The term often adopted is that of "concursum," or confluent authorship, i.e. That every word is both fully divine and fully human." –M. James Sawyer, *Theories of Inspiration*, www.bible.org.

³ "Inspiration is...God's superintendence of the human authors so that, using their own individual personalities, they composed and recorded without error His revelation to man in the words of the original autographs." - Charles C. Ryrie

⁴ "Inerrancy means that when all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs and properly interpreted will be shown to be wholly true in everything that they affirm whether that has to do with doctrine or morality or with the social, physical, or life sciences." –Paul D. Feinberg, *The Meaning of Inerrancy*, *Inerrancy*, Norman L. Geisler, ed. p.294.

⁵ "Infallible signifies the quality of neither misleading nor being misled and so safeguards in categorical terms the truth that Holy Scripture is a sure, safe, and reliable rule and guide in all matters." – Norman L. Geisler, *Appendix, Inerrancy*, Norman L. Geisler, ed. p.500.

Article 3. God the Father

While it is not given to the finite mind fully to comprehend the infinite God, it may be observed that some knowledge of Him is available and to enter into it becomes a privilege and duty.

We believe that the First Person of the Trinity, God the Father, is revealed through nature as its Designer and Creator. We believe that God the Father is the holy and loving Creator of all things. Unlimited in time, space, knowledge (past, present, and future), and power, the Father has providentially⁶ planned all that comes to pass. Although distinct from His creation, He is immanently⁷ at work. (Ps. 139: 1-16; 1 Cor. 8:6; John 5:17)

We believe that the First Person is revealed also through the Scriptures, which directly testify of Him, and through the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came to reveal Him (John 1:18) and to introduce men to Him (Matt. 11:27). We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all that come to Him through Jesus Christ. (John 3:16-17; 4:24; 17:5).

God is to be recognized both as Creator and Father. He has been presented by the Sacred Text as Father in three respects.

#1. We believe that the First Person is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The thought of inferiority or succession is not to be included in a divine Father and Son relationship. It is more nearly that of manifestation as evidenced in the unique, eternal affiliation between the First and Second Persons of the Godhead. Whenever Christ addressed the First Person as *God*, it is clearly indicated by so much that He spoke out from His humanity (cf. Matt. 27:46; Heb. 10:7).

#2. We believe that the First Person is the Father of all true believers.

All who receive Christ (cf. John 6:53), or believe on His name (cf. John 1:12–13), become legitimate offspring of God; they become conformed eventually to the image of God's Son—Christ, which truth requires that they have become actual sons of God, or else Christ would not be able to call them *brethren* (cf. Rom. 8:29), nor could they be heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ except they be constituted *actual* sons of God (Rom. 8:17). To the one thus recreated, the measureless value of his estate does not appear in the present world. It will be the major distinction characterizing throughout eternity those who are sons of God. As His present supreme purpose, God is now “bringing many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10).

⁶ Providence; a definition: “God’s providence is His constant care for and His absolute rule over all His creation for His own glory and the good of His people.” — Jerry Bridges

⁷ A distinction should be recognized between the immensity of God and the omnipresence of God. Immensity emphasizes the transcendence of God and stresses that He is not bound by space, whereas omnipresence emphasizes His immanence, filling all space, including earth. The doctrine of omnipresence is a comfort to the believer who recognizes that no calamity can befall him that God is not present with Him; it is also a warning to the disobedient person that he cannot escape the presence of God.

#3. We believe that the First Person is the Father of Israel.

Several times God addresses the nation of Israel as a father (cf. Ex. 4:22; Deut. 32:6; Isa. 63:16; 64:8). The latter designation when applied to Israel does not imply that individual Israelites were regenerated sons of God. The term appears to connote national solicitude or fatherhood by reason of parental care for all, much as Yahweh (YHWH)⁸ declared Himself to be a husband unto Israel (cf. Jer. 31:32).

Adopted by Elders, 20 August 2007

⁸ TETRAGRAMMATON* Term referring to the four consonants of one of the primary Hebrew names, for God (from Greek *tetra*, "four," and *gramma*, "a letter of the alphabet"). These letters are the Hebrew equivalents of English Y (or J), H, W, and H. The most widely accepted meaning of the name is "the one who is, that is, the absolute and unchangeable one." This is the name the Lord revealed to Moses (Ex 3:15; cf. vv 13–14; Jn 8:56–58). According to the Ten Commandments, the Jews were not to take this name in vain (Ex 20:2, 7). The Jews, therefore, regarded the name as so holy that they would not pronounce it but said instead *Adonai*, "Lord." Originally the text was written only with consonants, but when the scholars called Masoretes added the vowel points, they inserted the vowels for Adonai as a reminder not to read the sacred name. Non-Hebraists combined the vowels of Adonai with the consonants of JHWH, producing a new form, "Jehovah," which does not exist in the Hebrew language. The correct pronunciation of the name must have been Yahweh, but most translations render it LORD, using capital letters to distinguish it from other uses of the English word "Lord."

Article 4. God the Son

We believe that, as provided and purposed by God and as pre-announced in the prophecies of the Scriptures, the eternal Son of God came into this world that He might manifest God to men, fulfill prophecy and become the Redeemer of a lost world. To this end He was born of the virgin and received a human body, a sinless human nature, and He performed miracles that validated and authenticated His claims to His Person and teachings. (Luke 1:30-35; John 1:18; 3:16; Heb. 4:15).

We believe that on the human side, He became and remained a perfect man but sinless throughout his life; yet He retained His absolute deity being at the same time very God and very man (Luke 2:40; John 1:1-2; Phil. 2:5-8), and that His earth-life sometimes functioned within the sphere of that which was human and sometimes within the sphere of that which was divine.

We believe that in fulfillment of prophecy, He came first to Israel as her Messiah-King, and that being rejected of that nation, He according to the eternal counsels of God, gave His life as a ransom for all (John 1:11; Acts 2:22-24; 1 Tim. 2:6).

We believe that in infinite love for the lost, He voluntarily accepted His Father's will and became the divinely provided sacrificial Lamb and took away the sin of the world, bearing the holy judgments against sin which the righteousness of God must impose. His death was therefore substitutionary in the most absolute sense—the just for the unjust—and by His death, He became the Savior of the lost (John 1:29; Rom. 3:25-26; 2 Cor. 5:14; Heb. 10:5-14; 12 Pet. 3:18).

We believe that according to the Scriptures, He arose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He had lived and died, and that His resurrection body is the pattern of that body which ultimately will be given to all believers (John 20:20; Phil. 3:20-21).

We believe that on departing from the earth, He was accepted by His Father and that His acceptance is a final assurance to us that His redeeming work was perfectly accomplished (Heb. 1:3).

We believe that He became Head over all things to the church which is His body, and in this ministry He ceases not to intercede⁹ and advocate¹⁰ for the saved (Eph. 1:22-23; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1).

Adopted by Elders, 20 August 2007

⁹ *Christ's intercession assures the security of our salvation.* The believer could lose his salvation only if Christ would be ineffective in His role as mediator (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25). The intercession of Christ involves (1) His presence before the Father; (2) His spoken word (Luke 22:32; John 17:6-26); and (3) His continual intercession (note the present tense in the verbs).

¹⁰ *Christ's advocacy restores us to fellowship when that fellowship is broken through sin.* Christ is termed the believers' "Advocate" (Gk. *parakletos*), meaning "defense attorney" (1 John 2:1). "In rabbinical literature the word could indicate one who offers legal aid or one who intercedes on behalf of someone else...the word undoubtedly signified an 'advocate' or 'counsel for the defense' in a legal context."

Article 5. God the Holy Spirit

We believe that the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the blessed Trinity, though omnipresent from all eternity, took up His abode in the world in a special sense on the day of Pentecost according to the divine promise, dwells in every believer and, by His baptism, unites all to Christ in one body and that He, as the indwelling One, is the source of all power and all acceptable worship and service. We believe that He never takes His departure from the church, nor from the feeblest of the saints, but is ever present to testify of Christ; seeking to occupy believers with Him and not with themselves nor with their experiences.

We believe that in this age, based on that which the Holy Spirit is to the believer, the Holy Spirit has certain well-defined ministries, and that it is the duty of every Christian to understand what the Holy Spirit is to him, and does to him, and to be rightly adjusted to the Holy Spirit in his own life and experience. We believe that the Holy Spirit, as a special provision of God, is an **anointing** (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20-27), a **seal** (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:14; 4:30), and an **earnest** (2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 1:14). His ministries to the Christian are the restraining of evil in the world to the measure of the divine will; the convicting of the world respecting sin, righteousness and judgment; the regenerating¹¹ of all believers; the indwelling¹² of all who are saved whereby they are sealed¹³ unto the day of redemption and anointed of God for service; the baptizing¹⁴ into the one body of Christ of all who are saved; and the continued filling¹⁵ for power, witnessing, teaching, leading, and service of those among the saved who are yielded to Him and who are subject to His will (John 3:6; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:3-14; 1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:30; 5:18; 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 John 2:20-27).

We believe that some gifts¹⁶ of the Holy Spirit such as speaking in tongues and healings were given to be used as signs to authenticate God's message, and messenger of the first century church when the canon of Scripture was being formed. We believe that speaking in tongues was never the common or necessary sign of the baptism nor of the filling of the Spirit, and that the complete deliverance of the body from sickness or death awaits the consummation of our salvation in the resurrection (Acts 4:8, 31; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 13:8; 2 Cor. 12:12). We believe that in accordance with the sovereign will of God, miraculous healing may be manifest at God's discretion. We believe that other non-sign gifts were given to the church and that through the exercise of these gifts in the church, believers who learn and apply the truth of Scripture to their lives will mature spiritually. We further believe that ecstatic experiences, though they may be valid manifestations of the grace of God, do not appreciably contribute to one's spiritual maturity (Eph. 4:11-16; 1 Pet. 2:2).

Adopted by Elders, 20 August 2007

¹¹ Regeneration proves to be the imparting of the divine nature (cf. Titus 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23; 2:2). All believers, then, have divine sonship (Gal. 3:26, R.V.).

¹² A key verse that indicates the unique ministry of the Holy Spirit in this age is John 14:16 where Jesus promised the Spirit would indwell believers and that the indwelling would be permanent. This permanent indwelling would not be for a select few but for all believers.

¹³ The Holy Spirit is given to the person who believes in Christ as a seal, identifying the believer as belonging to God.

¹⁴ The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit may be defined as that work whereby the Spirit places the believer into union with Christ and into union with other believers in the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13).

¹⁵ The basis for the filling of the Spirit is Ephesians 5:18, "be filled with the Spirit." The meaning of "filled" (Gk. *plerousthe*) is "control." "The indwelling Spirit of God is the One who should continually control and dominate the life of the believer."

¹⁶ A concise definition of spiritual gifts is simply a "grace gift." A more complete definition is "a divine endowment of a special ability for service upon a member of the body of Christ."

Article 6. Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe that God created an innumerable company of sinless, spiritual beings, known as angels. We believe that angels are not the spirits of the departed nor are they glorified human beings. We believe that although angels are “spirits,” they nevertheless oftentimes have appeared to men in visible, and even human form. We believe that angels are beings of great might and power, but that it is always appropriated from God for His holy purposes. We believe that one angel, “Lucifer, son of the morning”—the highest in rank—sinned through pride, thereby becoming Satan; that a great company of the angels followed him in his moral fall, some of whom became demons and are active as his agents and associates in the prosecution of his unholy purposes, while others who fell are “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day” (Isa. 14:12-17; Col. 1:6; Heb. 12:22,23; Neh. 9:6; Heb. 1:14; Gen. 19; Judges 2:1; Mt. 1:20; Luke 1:26; 2 Pet. 2:11; 2 Thess. 1:7; Ezek. 28:11-19; 1 Tim. 3:6; 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6).

We believe that Satan was the first to sin, and that, under the permission of God, he, through subtlety, led our first parents into transgression, thereby accomplishing their moral fall and subjecting them and their posterity to his own power; that he is the enemy of God and the people of God, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped; and that he who in the beginning said, “I will be like the most High,” in his warfare appears as an angel of light, even counterfeiting the works of God by fostering religious movements and systems of doctrine, which systems in every case are characterized by a denial of the efficacy of the blood of Christ and of salvation by grace alone (Gen. 3:1-19; Rom. 5:12-14; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 11:13-15; Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Thess. 2:4; 1 Tim. 4:1-3).

We believe that Satan’s judgment was sealed at the cross, thereby suffering defeat, although his imminent penalty has not yet been carried out and that he, a usurper, now rules as the “god of this world”; that, at the second coming of Christ, Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss for a thousand years, and after the thousand years he will be loosed for a little season and then “cast into the lake of fire and brimstone,” where he “shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (John 12:31; Col. 1:15-19; 2:15; Rev. 20:1-3, 10).

We believe that a great company of angels kept their holy estate and are before the throne of God, from whence they are sent forth as ministering spirits to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Luke 15:10; Eph. 1:21; Heb. 1:14; Rev. 7:12).

We believe that man was made lower than the angels; and that, in His incarnation, Christ took for a little time this lower place that He might lift the believer to His own sphere above the angels (Heb. 2:6-10).

Adopted by Elders, 20 August 2007

Article 7. Man, Created and Fallen

We believe that man¹⁷ was originally created on the sixth day of creation, by God in the image and after the likeness of God, for the purpose of glorifying and worshipping his Creator.

We believe that material man is a direct creation from existing substances and that immaterial man was breathed into him as the very breath of God and thus became a living soul.

We believe that man left his first estate through willful rebellion against God's will and that he fell through sin, and, as a consequence of his sin, lost his spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins, and that he became subject to the power of the devil. This fall of man was accomplished through the design and influence of Satan. The sin which caused the fall of man was not only suggested by Satan, but was the identical form of it which Satan had himself followed and by which he fell from that high estate into which he was placed by creation, namely, acting independently of God through disobedience and thus repudiating all divine right and authority over himself (cf. Gen. 3:5; Isa. 14:12–14).

We also believe that this spiritual death, or total depravity of human nature, has been transmitted¹⁸ to the entire human race of man, the Man Christ Jesus alone being excepted; and hence that every child of Adam is born into the world with a nature which not only possesses no divine life, but is essentially and unchangeably separated from God apart from divine grace (Gen. 1:26; 2:17; 6:5; Ps. 14:1–3; 51:5; Jer. 17:9; John 3:6; 5:40; 6:35; Rom. 3:10–19; 8:6–7; Eph. 2:1–3; 1 Tim. 5:6; 1 John 3:8).

Adopted by Elders, 20 August 2007

¹⁷ "man" here and following is gender inclusive referring to humanity

¹⁸ We believe that the Fall and its penalty are visited upon the whole human family. That penalty to which spiritual death is due is transmitted *mediately* from parent to child, while the penalty of physical death is imputed *immediately* from Adam to each individual member of his race, the divine reckoning being that each member of the race was seminally in Adam when the first man sinned and therefore each member shared in that sin. This reckoning of Adam's sin to his race is a *real* imputation, rather than a *judicial* imputation. This divine principle of reckoning is clearly indicated in Hebrews 7:9–10, where Levi, who as a priest was supported by the tithes of the people, did, nevertheless, pay tithes when Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek since he was as a great grandson in the loins of father Abraham.

Article 8. Salvation

Salvation only through Christ

We believe that, owing to universal death through sin, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless born again; and that no degree of reformation however great, no attainments in morality however high, no culture however attractive, no baptism or other ordinance however administered, can help the sinner to take even one step toward heaven; but a new nature imparted from above, a new life implanted by the Holy Spirit through the Word, is absolutely essential to salvation, and only those thus saved are sons of God. We believe, also, that our redemption has been accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, who was made to be sin and was made a curse for us, dying in our room and stead; and that no repentance, no feeling, no faith, no good resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to the rules and regulations of any church, nor all the churches that have existed since the days of the Apostles can add in the very least degree to the value of the blood, or to the merit of the finished work wrought for us by Him who united in His person true and proper deity with perfect and sinless humanity (Lev. 17:11; Isa. 64:6; Matt. 26:28; John 3:7-18; Rom. 5:6-9; 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 6:15; Eph. 1:7; Phil. 3:4-9; Titus 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:18-19, 23).

We believe that the new birth of the believer comes only through faith in Christ and that repentance is a vital part of believing, and is in no way, in itself, a separate and independent condition of salvation; nor are any other acts, such as confession, baptism, prayer, or faithful service, to be added to believing as a condition of salvation (John 1:12; 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:29; Acts 13:39; 16:31; Rom. 1:16-17; 3:22, 26; 4:5; 10:4; Gal. 3:22).

The Extent of Salvation

We believe that when an unregenerate person exercises that faith in Christ which is illustrated and described as such in the New Testament, he passes immediately out of spiritual death into spiritual life, and from the old creation into the new; being justified from all things, accepted before the Father according as Christ His Son is accepted, loved as Christ is loved, having his place and portion as linked to Him and one with Him forever. Though the saved one may have occasion to grow in the realization of his blessings and to know a fuller measure of divine power through the yielding of his life more fully to God, he is, as soon as he is saved, in possession of every spiritual blessing and absolutely complete in Christ, and is therefore in no way required by God to seek a so-called "second blessing," or a "second work of grace" (John 5:24; 17:23; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:1; 1 Cor. 3:21-23; Eph. 1:3; Col. 2:10; 1 John 4:17; 5:11-12).

Sanctification

We believe that sanctification, which is a setting-apart unto God, is threefold: It is already complete for every saved person because his position toward God is the same as Christ's position. Since the believer is in Christ, he is set apart unto God in the measure in which Christ is set apart unto God. We believe, however, that he retains his sin nature, which cannot be eradicated in this life. Therefore, while the standing of the Christian in Christ is perfect, his present state is no more perfect than his experience in daily life. There is, therefore, a progressive sanctification wherein the Christian is to "grow in grace," and to "be changed" by the unhindered power of the Spirit. We believe also that the child of God will yet be fully sanctified in his state as he is now sanctified in his standing in Christ when he shall see his Lord and shall be "like Him" (John 17:17; 2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1; Eph. 4:24; 5:25-27; 1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 10:10, 14; 12:10).

Eternal Security

We believe that, because of the eternal purpose of God toward the objects of His love, because of His freedom to exercise grace toward the meritless on the ground of the propitiatory blood of Christ, because of the very nature of the divine gift of eternal life, because of the present and unending intercession and advocacy of Christ in heaven, because of the immutability of the unchangeable covenants of God, because of the regenerating, abiding presence of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of all who are saved, we and all true believers everywhere, once saved are kept saved forever. We believe, however, that God is a holy and righteous Father and that, since He cannot overlook the sin of His children, He will, when they persistently sin, chasten them and correct them in infinite love; but having undertaken to save them and keep them forever, apart from all human merit, He, who cannot fail, will in the end present every one of them faultless before the presence of His glory and conformed to the image of His Son (John 5:24; 10:28; 13:1; 14:16–17; 17:11; Rom. 8:29; 1 Cor. 6:19; Heb. 7:25; 1 John 2:1–2; 5:13; Jude 24).

Assurance

We believe it is the privilege, not only of some, but of all who are born again by the Spirit through faith in Christ as revealed in the Scriptures, to be assured of their salvation from the very day they take Him to be their Savior and that this assurance is not founded upon any fancied discovery of their own worthiness or fitness, but wholly upon the testimony of God in His written Word, exciting within His children filial love, gratitude, and obedience (Luke 10:20; 22:32; 2 Cor. 5:1, 6–8; 2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 10:22; 1 John 5:13).

Adopted by Elders, 20 August 2007

Article 9. The Church

The Church, Universal and Local

We believe in the one universal Church, whose Foundation and Founder is the Lord Jesus Christ, composed of all those united, by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, to the risen and ascended Son of God as members of the church which is the body and bride of Christ. We believe that the functional beginning of the Church occurred on the Day of Pentecost, and that the Church is completely distinct from Israel, and will be consummated at the rapture of the Church wherein the spiritual building will be complete. The Church is chosen in Christ and united to Him through faith by the Spirit in one Body, with Christ Himself as the all- supplying, all- sustaining, all-supreme, and all-authoritative Head. (Matt. 16:18-20; Acts 2; 1 Cor. 3:11, 12:13; Acts 11:15-17, 20:28; 1 Thes. 4:13-18; Eph. 2:20-22; 1 Pet. 2:4-7; Rom. 11:25)

We believe it is God's will that the universal Church find expression in local churches in which believers assemble together for the purpose to worship God, instruction in His Word, participation in fellowship, and actively engage in expressions of faith. Believers gather to hear the Word of God proclaimed, to engage in corporate worship, to practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, to build each other's faith through the manifold ministries of love, to hold each other accountable in the obedience of faith through Biblical discipline, and to engage in local and world evangelization. The Church is a body in which each member should find a suitable ministry for His grace-gifts; it is the household of God in which the Spirit dwells; it is the pillar and bulwark of God's truth in a truth-denying world. (Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:19-25).

We believe that the ultimate purpose of the Church is to glorify God in the everlasting and ever-increasing gladness of worship. (1 Cor. 10:31; Rev. 5:9-12)

We believe that by the same Spirit all believers in this age are baptized into, and thus become, one body that is Christ's, whether Jews or Gentiles, and having become members one of another, are under solemn duty to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian differences, and fervently loving one another with a pure heart (Matt. 16:16-18; Acts 2:42-47; Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27; Eph. 1:20-23; 4:3-10; Col. 3:14-15).

We believe that whether Christ-followers are *gathered* or *scattered* we are 'the Church' (1 Pet. 2:9-10)

The Church, Christ's Ordinances

We believe that believer baptism is an ordinance of the Lord by which those who have come to faith publicly express their union with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, by being immersed in water in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is a one-time outward physical expression of an internal spiritual reality of belonging to Christ, His message and His people.

We believe that the Lord's Supper is an ordinance of the Lord in which gathered believers eat bread, signifying Christ's body given for His people, and drink the cup of the Lord, signifying the New Covenant in Christ's blood. We do this often in remembrance of the Lord, and thus proclaim His death until He comes.

We believe that believer baptism and the Lord's Supper are the only ordinances of the church and that they are a scriptural means of testimony for the church in this age (Matt. 28:19; Luke 22:19-20; Acts 10:47-48; 16:32-33; 18:7-8; 1 Cor. 11:26).

The Church, Christ's Organization

We believe that the church has four offices; Jesus Christ the Head (Col. 1:18), the Priesthood of Believers (Rev. 1:6), Elders (Overseers) (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1), and Deacons (1Tim. 3).

We believe that each local church should recognize and affirm the divine calling of spiritually qualified men to give leadership to the church through the role of Elders (Overseers) in the ministry of the Word and prayer.

The Church, the Christian's Walk

We believe that we are called with a holy calling, to walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, and so to live in the power of the indwelling Spirit that we will not fulfill the lust of the flesh. But the flesh with its fallen, Adamic nature, which in this life is never eradicated, being with us to the end of our earthly pilgrimage, needs to be kept by the Spirit constantly in subjection to Christ, or it will surely manifest its presence in our lives to the dishonor of our Lord (Rom. 6:11-13; 8:2, 4, 12-13; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 2:1-10; 1 Pet. 1:14-16; 1 John 1:4-7; 3:5-9).

The Church, Christ's Command and Commission

We believe the church is commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind and our neighbors as ourselves. (Matt. 22:37-40)

We believe that the commission given by the Lord Jesus to make disciples of all nations is binding on His Church to the end of the age. This task is to proclaim the Gospel to every tribe and tongue and people and nation, baptizing them, teaching them to observe the words and ways of the Lord, and gathering them into churches able to fulfill their Christian calling among their own people. The ultimate aim of world missions is that God would create, by His Word, worshippers who glorify His name through glad-hearted faith and obedience. Missions exist because universal, worldwide worship does not exist. When the time of ingathering is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and the goal of missions. (Matt. 28:18-20; Rev. 5:9; Acts 14:23; Rom. 1:5; John 4:23; Rom. 15:8-11)

We believe that it is the explicit message of our Lord Jesus Christ to those whom He has saved that they are sent forth by Him into the world even as He was sent forth of His Father into the world. We believe that, after they are saved, they are divinely reckoned to be related to this world as strangers and pilgrims, ambassadors and witnesses, to make Christ known to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-19; Mark 16:15; John 17:18; Acts 1:8; 2 Cor. 5:18-20; 1 Pet. 1:17; 2:11).

The Church, the Christian's Service

We believe that divine, enabling grace-gifts for service are bestowed by the Spirit upon all who are saved. While there is a diversity of gifts, each believer is energized by the same Spirit, and each is called to their own divinely appointed service as the Spirit may will. In the early church there were certain gifted people—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers—who were appointed by God for the perfecting of the saints unto their work of the ministry. We believe also that today some people are engifted by the Spirit to be evangelists, pastors and teachers, and that it is to the fulfilling of His will and to His eternal glory that these shall be sustained and encouraged in their service for God (Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 4:11).

We believe that, wholly apart from salvation benefits which are bestowed equally upon all who believe, rewards are promised according to the faithfulness of each believer in their service to God, and that these rewards will be bestowed at the judgment seat of Christ after He comes to receive His own to Himself (1 Cor. 3:9-15; 9:18-27; 2 Cor. 5:10).

Adopted by Elders, 25 February 2008

Article 10. Consummation of the Age and Future Things

God's Administration of History

We believe that God has administered His purposes on earth in varying ways known as dispensations. Though time is not a primary consideration, each divine administration, or dispensation, relates to a definite period of human history (Eph. 1:9-10). The vast majority of the Bible deals with three such dispensations: the dispensation of Israel from the call of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3) to Jesus Christ (Gal.4:4), the present dispensation of the Church from Pentecost (Acts 2) to the Rapture (1Thes. 4:13-17) and the future dispensation of Jesus Christ's 1000-year kingdom reign theologically designated as the Millennium (Rev. 20:6).

We believe that dispensations are not different ways of forgiveness and eternal life, but different administrations of God as He superintends the way mankind lives on earth (Eph. 3:9). Eternal salvation was, is, and always will be a free gift by grace alone through faith alone, based on the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone (Eph. 2:8-9).

We believe that it has always been true that "without faith it is impossible to please" God (Heb. 11:6), and that the principle of faith was prevalent in the lives of all the Old Testament saints. However, we believe that it was historically impossible that they should have had as the conscious object of their faith the incarnate, crucified Son, the Lamb of God (John 1:29), and that it is evident that they did not comprehend as we do that the sacrifices depicted the person and work of Christ. We believe also that they did not understand the redemptive significance of the prophecies or types concerning the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 1:10-12); therefore, we believe that their faith toward God was manifested in other ways as is shown by the long record in Hebrews 11:1-40. We believe further that their faith thus manifested was counted unto them for righteousness (cf. Rom. 4:3 with Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:5-8; Heb. 11:7).

Dispensationalism is a system of a literal, grammatical, historical hermeneutic (2 Tim. 2:15). We believe that the promises to Israel are not fulfilled in the Church, but will be literally realized by believing Israel in the future (Rom. 11:25-27).

The Blessed Hope

We believe that, according to the Word of God, the next great event in the fulfillment of prophecy will be the coming of the Lord in the air to receive to Himself into heaven both His own who are alive and remain unto His coming, and also all who have fallen asleep in Jesus, and that this event is the blessed hope set before us in Scripture, and for this we should be constantly looking (John 14:1-3; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-14).

The Tribulation

We believe that the translation of the church will be followed by the fulfillment of Israel's seventieth week (Dan. 9:27; Rev. 6:1-19:21) during which the church, the body of Christ, will be in heaven. The whole period of Israel's seventieth week will be a time of judgment on the whole earth, at the end of which the times of the Gentiles will be brought to a close. The latter half of this period will be the time of Jacob's trouble (Jer. 30:7), which our Lord called the great tribulation (Matt. 24:15-21). We believe that universal righteousness will not be realized prior to the second coming of Christ, but that the world is day by day ripening for judgment and that the age will end with a fearful apostasy.

The Second Coming of Christ

We believe that the period of great tribulation in the earth will be climaxed by the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to the earth as He went, in person on the clouds of heaven, and with power and great glory to introduce the millennial age, to bind Satan and place him in the abyss, to lift the curse which now rests upon the whole creation, to restore Israel to her own land and to give her the realization of God's covenant promises, and to bring the whole world to the knowledge of God (Deut. 30:1-10; Isa. 11:9; Ezek. 37:21-28; Matt. 24:15-25:46; Acts 15:16-17; Rom. 8:19-23; 11:25-27; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; 2 Tim. 3:1-5; Rev. 20:1-3).

The Eternal State

We believe that at death the spirits and souls of those who have trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation pass immediately into His presence and there remain in conscious bliss until the resurrection of the glorified body when Christ comes for His own, whereupon soul and body reunited shall be associated with Him forever in glory; but the spirits and souls of the unbelieving remain after death conscious of condemnation and in misery until the final judgment of the great white throne at the close of the millennium, when soul and body reunited shall be cast into the lake of fire, not to be annihilated, but to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power (Luke 16:19-26; 23:42; 2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:23; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Jude 6-7; Rev. 20:11-15).

The Eternal Abode

We believe that God will prepare the new heaven and new earth and the New Jerusalem in which righteousness dwells (2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21).

Adopted by Elders, 25 February 2008

Summation: The Spirit of this Affirmation and the Unity of the Church

We do not believe that all things in this affirmation of faith are of equal weight, some being more essential, some less. We do not believe that every part of this affirmation must be believed in order for one to be saved.

Our aim is not to discover how little can be believed, but rather to embrace and teach “the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:27). Our aim is to encourage a hearty adherence to the Bible, the fullness of its truth, (Titus 1:1; 1 Tim. 4:1; 6:3-5) and the glory of its Author. We believe Biblical doctrine stabilizes saints in the winds of confusion (Eph. 4:13-14) and strengthens the church in her mission to meet the great systems of false religion and secularism. We believe that the supreme virtue of love is nourished by the strong meat of God-centered doctrine. (1 Tim. 1:5). And we believe that a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ is sustained in an atmosphere of deep and joyful knowledge of God and His wonderful works. (Psa. 9:10).

We believe that the cause of unity in the church (Eph. 4:4-6) is best served, not by finding the lowest common denominator of doctrine, around which all can gather, but by elevating the value of truth, stating the doctrinal parameters of church or school or mission or ministry, seeking the unity that comes from the truth, and then demonstrating to the world how Christians can love each other (John 13:34-35) across boundaries rather than by removing boundaries. In this way, the importance of truth is served by the existence of doctrinal borders, and unity is served by the way we love others across those borders.

We do not claim infallibility for this affirmation and are open to refinement and correction from Scripture. (1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Pet. 3:18). Yet we do hold firmly to these truths as we see them and call on others to search the Scriptures to see if these things are so (Acts 17:11). As conversation and debate take place, it may be that we will learn from each other, and the boundaries will be adjusted, even possibly folding formerly disagreeing groups into closer fellowship.

* * *

NOTE: The many Biblical descriptions of God’s work in salvation are diverse. Therefore, similar or identical terms may be used differently in different contexts. Our aim in this affirmation of faith is not to limit how Biblical writers can use the terms we use here, or to say that the terms of this affirmation may not be used differently by the Biblical writers in various contexts, but rather our aim is to claim that the reality described here is in fact Biblical reality.

Statement of Agreement

I am signing this *Elder Affirmation of Faith of GracePoint Church of Ephrata*, indicating my agreement and with any exceptions noted and explained (knowing that these exceptions may limit my teaching opportunities and/or subjects).

(Elder, Deacon, Faculty, Missionary)*

(Date)

*Sign both copies, retaining one for your records and returning the other to the church office.

Exceptions (with explanations):

Tier 2 Affirmation of Faith for Membership

As members of GracePoint Church of Ephrata, we believe and affirm that this statement of faith reflects the truth of God's Word.

Article 1 – Revelation, Scripture & Authority

We believe the Scriptures - the 39 books of the Old Testament and 27 books of the New Testament - provide God's authoritative written revelation to mankind (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Galatians 1:12). God interacted with the human writers of those books so that every word of the original texts was exactly as He wanted (2 Peter 1:20-21) and without error¹⁹ (John 17:17). The Scriptures are the supreme and final authority for life and doctrine (Psalm 19:7-11; Psalm 119; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:12).

Article 2 – The Godhead (Trinity)

We believe there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; 1 Timothy 2:5) in three persons²⁰—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; John 6:27; John 10:30; 1 Corinthians 3:16); one in nature, attributes, and glory. These three are one God (2 Corinthians 13:14), infinite (Malachi 3:6; Acts 17:24), eternal (Hebrews 1:8), unchangeable (James 1:17), all wise (Romans 11:33), all powerful (Isaiah 40), all knowing (Psalm 147:5), holy (Isaiah 6:3), just (Psalm 9:16), loving (1 John 4:7-21), gracious (Romans 3:23-24; Galatians 3:18), good (Psalm 100:5), and true (Isaiah 45:19). He is everywhere present, yet not part of His creation (Psalm 139:7-12).

GOD the FATHER We believe that the Father is God (Isaiah 64:8). He begins and ends all things according to His own purpose and grace (Psalm 90:2). He is the Creator (Revelation 4:11) and Sustainer (Psalm 104) of all things, and the spiritual Father of believers (1 John 5:11). He expresses Himself in relationships with those whom He chooses, binding Himself to them by His eternal promises (Genesis 9:9; 17:7-9; 2 Samuel 7:8-16; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 8:29-30; Hebrews 10:16). He is loving (Ephesians 2:3-5), long-suffering, and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (John 3:17; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

GOD the SON We believe that Jesus Christ is God (John 10:30; Colossians 1:17; Titus 3:4-5). He is fully God (John 1:1-2, 14; John 17:1-5) and fully man (Philippians 2:5-8). He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25), lived a sinless life (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15), performed miracles (Matthew 11:4-5; John 2:11), died as the only sufficient sacrifice for our sins, and was buried (Matthew 20:28; John 1:29; Romans 3:25; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Hebrews 10:5-14; 1 Peter 3:18). He was resurrected bodily (Matthew 28:5-10), appeared to the apostles and other witnesses (1 Corinthians 15:5-8), ascended to heaven (Acts 1:9), was glorified (1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:9), and now intercedes for believers (Romans 8:34).

GOD the HOLY SPIRIT We believe that the Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). He convicts people of sin (John 16:8-11) and restrains the extent of sin in the world (Genesis 6:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:7). He convicts people (Jn. 16:8-11) and urges them to turn from sin (2 Corinthians 3:2-3; Romans 8:1-14), believe in the Son (1 Thessalonians 1:2-5), and be born again (John 3:3-7). We believe that the baptism in the Holy Spirit takes place at the moment of salvation, and that there is no other "baptism of the Spirit" taught in the Scriptures. At the moment of salvation the Holy Spirit comes to live within every believer forever (John 14:16; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30). He fills believers with His power (Acts 1:8; Ephesians 3:16), enables them to live in obedience to the will of God (Galatians 5:16-26), teaches them (1 Corinthians 2:13-15; 1 John 2:27), and gives them His gifts "to each one individually just as He wills," to serve the church (1 Corinthians 12:7,11; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10; Ephesians 4:11). The Holy Spirit provides gifts to believers to serve the body of Christ and to reach the world with the gospel (1 Corinthians 12:4-7; 1 Peter 4:10). Spiritual gifts should be used in a proper and orderly manner (1

¹⁹ This doctrine is referred to as "inerrancy."

²⁰ This doctrine is referred to as "trinitarianism."

Corinthians 14:40), in love (1 Corinthians 14:1), and without causing division (1 Corinthians 12:25). Spiritual gifts are not an indication of spiritual maturity, and they should not be used for self-promotion (1 Corinthians 12:11-12).

Article 3 – Angels, Fallen and Unfallen

We believe that God created angels as spiritual beings to glorify and serve Him. Angels also act as God's messengers and minister to believers. Although powerful, they are never to be worshipped (Colossians 1:16; 2:18; Psalm 103:20; Hebrews 1:13-14; Revelation 22:8-9). Satan, an angel of high rank, led many angels in a rebellion against God, bringing judgment against himself and his followers (Isaiah 14:12-15; Ezekiel 28:12-19; John 16:11; 2 Peter 2:4). Satan tempted Adam and Eve into rebellion against God (Genesis 3:1-19; 2 Corinthians 11:3) and continues, with other fallen angels (demons), to deceive and tempt all of mankind and actively oppose the purposes of God (2 Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 6:10-18; 1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 12:9). By His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus Christ defeated Satan and his demons; they will be thrown into the lake of fire forever at the last judgment (Matthew 25:41; John 12:31-32; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 20:10).

Article 4 – Man, Created and Fallen

We believe that God created Adam and Eve, the first humans, without sin and in perfect fellowship with Him (Genesis 1:26-28, 31; 2:18-24; James 3:9). They chose to sin by disobeying God and incurred His judgment. Their sin separated them from Him and brought suffering and death upon themselves, their descendants, and the whole creation (Genesis 3; Psalm 14:1-3; 51:5; Romans 8:20-22). Mankind's continued unbridled wickedness brought further judgment, which destroyed the earth in a world-wide flood (Genesis 6-8; 2 Peter 2:4-5). After the flood, mankind's continued rebellion at Babel brought God's judgment in confusing their language and scattering them over the face of the earth (Genesis 11:1-9; Luke 1:51). All people inherit Adam's sin nature (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12), are spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1), and are sinners ourselves (Romans 3:10, 23; 5:12). Consequently, none of us are able by our efforts to reconcile ourselves to God (Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 8:8).

Article 5 – Salvation

We believe that we are given salvation from sin and its penalty as a free gift from God (Romans 6:23) through faith and trust in Jesus Christ alone, unaided by human effort (John 3:16; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7). The death of Christ is full payment for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3; Hebrews 9:11-15; 1 Peter 1:18-21) and satisfies the just requirement of God (Romans 3:23-26; Hebrews 10:1-10). Made alive by God (1 Corinthians 15:22; Ephesians 2:4-7; 1 Peter 3:18), we are no longer slaves to sin (Romans 6), but are children of God (John 1:12; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 3:26), disciples set apart to a life of spiritual growth, ministry, love, and good works (Ephesians 2:10; Colossians 1:10-14; 3:12-17; Hebrews 12:1-2; 1 Peter 2:2). We have forgiveness for every sin (Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:9) and rest secure in the reality of eternal life (John 5:24; 6:39-40; 10:27-30; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 John 5:9-13).

Article 6 – The Church

We believe that Christ established the church and is the Head of the church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18). The church comprises believers from its beginning at Pentecost until the return of Christ (Acts 2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58). Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the church carries out Christ's work in the world (John 15:26; Acts 1:8). The purpose of the church is to worship, praise, and glorify God by proclaiming the gospel of Christ Jesus to the entire world (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8); by teaching His Word (Colossians 1:24-28; 1 Timothy 4:11); by seeking Him through earnest prayer (Acts 2:42); by equipping the saints to walk, serve, and fellowship in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42-46; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 14:26); and by keeping the ordinances (1 Corinthians 11:24, 25; Matthew 28:19). We believe that the Lord gave two ordinances to the church: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is for believers and is a public testimony of faith in Christ in obedience to His command (Matthew 28:19). Baptism identifies the believer with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (Colossians 2:12) and is best represented by immersion (Acts 8:36-39). The Lord's Supper is the believer's remembrance of our Lord's death until He comes and should be preceded by careful spiritual self-examination of the participant (Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-28). We believe that the church is expressed in local congregations of believers established under the headship of Christ and the authority of Scripture (Galatians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Revelation 1:11). Individual congregations are to be governed by Elders (1 Timothy 3:1-7), men meeting biblical standards, who are responsible to guard the purity of church doctrine (Titus 1:9), to shepherd the flock (1 Peter 5:1-3), and to oversee church matters (Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17). Deacons are responsible for assisting the Elders in the work of the ministry (Acts 6:1-6; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8-13).

Article 7 – Consummation of the Age and Future Things

We believe that Jesus Christ will physically return in the air to take the church out of the world to be with Him forever (John 14:2-3; 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17). Scripture tells us to be ready always for His coming (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6; Revelation 22:20). At that moment, the dead in Christ and living believers will be given their eternal bodies (1 Corinthians 15:51-53). Jesus Christ will then bring a seven-year period of wrath upon the earth known as the tribulation (1 Thessalonians 5:2, 3; Revelation 6-18). At the end of this period of judgment, He will return bodily (Acts 1:9-11; Zechariah 14:4-8) with the church to set up a kingdom to rule in righteousness the entire earth for a thousand years (Revelation 19:1-20:6; Matthew 13:41-43). The kingdom will end in rebellion against Christ and His people (Revelation 20:7-9), but the rebellion will fail in the face of Christ's victory over Satan and all who oppose Him (Revelation 20:9-10). The unbelieving dead of all time will then be raised and given eternal bodies to face God in final judgment (Revelation 20:11), after which they will be thrown into the lake of fire to eternal torment (Revelation 20:15). Believers will enter a new heaven and new earth (Revelation 21:1-22:6) prepared for them to enjoy perfect, everlasting fellowship with God.

Article VI – Amendments

This constitution, including the statement of faith and the church covenant, may be amended by the same process as that for amending the bylaws. The amendment process is described in the bylaws.

Article VII - Review

This Constitution of GracePoint Church of Ephrata will be reviewed and evaluated by the Elders every three (3) years beginning in 2012.

THE BYLAWS OF GRACEPOINT CHURCH OF EPHRATA

Article I - Membership

Section 1 – Admission

A prospective member must profess faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Savior, give evidence of a changed life, have been baptized as a believer, participate in an orientation class and accept and agree to abide by the church's constitution (including the Tier 2 statement of faith and its bylaws. The Elders may examine such persons and receive them into membership.

Section 2 – Designation of Membership

Members are those who have met all membership qualifications above, are currently active in the church. Members, eighteen (18) years old or older, may vote on the matters listed in Section 3 below. With approval of the Elders, active members may serve in appropriate leadership and ministry positions in the church. (The words "congregation" or "congregational" throughout these by-laws refer to the body of active members.) Members who willfully, without plausible reason, absent themselves from the services of the church for a period of one (1) year may be removed from membership by the Elders.

Section 3: Voting Rights of Active Members

Active members will vote on Elder recommendations in the following matters:

1. New pastors, Elders, and Deacons;
2. The annual budget of the church;
3. Acquisition of real property and associated indebtedness;
4. Disposition of all or substantially all of the church's assets;
5. Amendments to the constitution or bylaws;
6. Merger or dissolution of the church;
7. Any other major event or decision as designated by the Elders.

Section 4 – Release of Members

Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Board of Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons therefore. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Board of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Board of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to their gifts and needs. If it appears to the Board of Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded. Any member resigning or joining another church will be removed from the membership. Deceased members shall be removed from the church rolls. In the course of any discipline process, the Board of Elders, at their discretion, may remove a member from the church membership rolls.

Section 5 – Church Discipline and Restoration

The purposes of church discipline and restoration are to restore a member engaged in sin to a right relationship with the Lord and His church and to protect the purity of the church in doctrine and practice. It shall be the practice of this church to pursue every reasonable measure for peace and reconciliation. Should a member become an offense to the church and its dignity by reason of immoral conduct, un-Christian conduct, or promoting false doctrine, the Elders may terminate membership or privileges of membership (e.g., voting), but only after due notice and opportunity for hearing. If faithful efforts, in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17, to bring a member to repentance are unsuccessful, the Elders shall provide written notice to the member, describing an opportunity for a hearing with the Elders. This notice of the hearing shall be delivered at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing. At the conclusion of the hearing, a letter of termination or other church discipline may be issued by the Elders.

A. Termination of Membership

Members may be removed from membership at their own request by informing the Board of Elders of their intention to withdraw and the reasons therefore. If a member requests to withdraw because of specific problems or disappointments with the church, the Board of Elders shall attempt to resolve those matters so that the member may remain in the church and enjoy greater fruitfulness and personal spiritual growth. If the Board of Elders is unable to resolve those matters, it shall offer to assist the member in locating a church of like faith and practice that can respond more effectively to their gifts and needs. If it appears to the Board of Elders that a member has requested removal merely to avoid church discipline, that request shall not be given effect until the disciplinary process has been properly concluded.

B. Confidentiality

1. The Bible teaches that Christians should carefully guard any personal and private information that others reveal to them. Protecting confidentiality is a sign of Christian love and respect (see Matt. 7:12). It also discourages harmful gossip (Prov. 16:28; 26:20), invites confession (see Prov. 11:13; 28:13; James 5:16), and encourages people to seek needed counseling (see Prov. 20:19; Rom. 15:14). Since these goals are essential to the ministry of the gospel and the work of this church, all members are expected to refrain from gossip and to respect the confidences of others. In particular, our pastors and Elders shall carefully protect all information that they receive through pastoral counseling, subject to the provisions of this section.

2. Although confidentiality is to be respected as much as possible, there are times when it is appropriate to reveal certain information to others. In particular, when the pastors and Elders of this church believe it is biblically necessary, they may disclose confidential information to appropriate people in the following circumstances:

(1) When a pastor or Elder is uncertain of how to counsel a person about a particular problem and needs to seek advice from other pastors or Elders in this church or, if the person attends another church, from the pastors or Elders of that church (see Prov. 11:14; 13:10; 15:22; 19:20; 20:18; Matt. 18:15-17);

(2) When the person who disclosed the information or any other person is in imminent danger of serious harm unless others intervene (see Prov. 24:11-12);

(3) When a person refuses to repent of sin and it becomes necessary to institute disciplinary proceedings (see Matt. 18:15-20 and Bylaws) or seek the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see, e.g., Rom. 13:1-5);

(4) When required by law; or

(5) When a person's actions have become public through other channels and the church is not bound to confidentiality.

3. Scripture commands that confidential information is to be shared with others only when a problem cannot be resolved through the efforts of a small group of people within the church (Matt. 18:15-17). Therefore, except as provided in Section 5, subsection B above, a pastor or Elder may not disclose confidential information to anyone outside this church without the approval of the Board of Elders or the consent of the person who originally disclosed the information. The Board of Elders may approve such disclosure only when it finds that all internal efforts to resolve a problem have been exhausted (see, e.g., 1 Cor. 6:1-8) and the problem cannot be satisfactorily resolved without the assistance of individuals or agencies outside this church (see, e.g., Rom. 13:1-5). This limitation shall apply to but is not limited to the giving of testimony in a court of law and the reporting of abuse.

4. The pastors and Elders may, but need not, provide a counselee with written notice of these confidentiality provisions, but these provisions shall be in effect regardless of whether such notice is given.

C. Conflict resolution

1. This church is committed to resolving in a Biblical manner all disputes that may arise within our body. This commitment is based on God's command that Christians should strive earnestly to live at peace with one another (see Matt. 5:9; John 17:20-23; Rom. 12:18; and Eph. 4:13) and that when disputes arise, Christians should resolve them according to the principles set forth in Holy Scripture (see Prov. 19:11; Matt. 5:23-25; 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1). We believe that these commands and principles are obligatory on all Christians and absolutely essential for the well-being and work of the church. Therefore, any and all disputes in this church shall be resolved according to Biblical principles, as provided in this bylaw.

2. When a member of this church has a conflict with, or is concerned about the behavior of another member, he shall attempt to resolve the matter as follows:

(1) The offended or concerned person shall prayerfully examine themselves and take responsibility for their contribution to a problem (Matt. 7:3-5), and they shall prayerfully seek to discern whether the offense is so serious that it cannot be overlooked (Prov. 19:11; see also Prov. 12:16; 15:18; 17:14; 20:3; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:13; 1 Pet. 4:8).

(2) If the offense is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall go, repeatedly if necessary, and talk to the offender in an effort to resolve the matter personally and privately, having first confessed their own wrongdoing (Matt. 18:15).

(3) If the offender will not listen and if the problem is too serious to overlook, the offended or concerned person shall return with one or two other people who will attempt to help the parties resolve their differences (Matt. 18:16); these other people may be members or officers of the church, other respected Christians in the community, or trained mediators

or arbitrators (conciliators) from a Christian conciliation ministry. At the request of either party to the dispute, the church shall make every effort to assist the parties in resolving their differences and being reconciled.

3. If a dispute arises within the church or between a member and the church and cannot be resolved through the internal procedures described above, it shall be resolved as follows:

(1) The dispute shall be submitted to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Institute for Christian Conciliation, and judgment upon an arbitration award may be entered in any court otherwise having jurisdiction.

(2) All mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with the statement of faith of GracePoint Church of Ephrata and our basic form of government, unless this requirement is modified or waived by all parties to the dispute. If a dispute involves an attempted revision of the statement of faith or our form of government, the mediators and arbitrators shall be in agreement with those documents as they existed prior to the attempted revision.

(3) If a dispute submitted to arbitration involves a decision reached by an official judiciary (court or ruling body) of this church or mutually agreed upon independent conciliator the arbitrators shall uphold the highest judicatory's decisions on matters of doctrine and church discipline.

(4) This section covers the church as a corporate entity and its agents, including its pastors, officers, staff, and volunteers with regard to any actions they may take in their official capacities.

(5) This section covers any and all disputes or claims arising from or related to church membership, doctrine, policy, practice, counseling, discipline, decisions, actions, or failures to act, including claims based on civil statute or for personal injury.

(6) By regular attendance to this church, all members agree that these 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, except to enforce an arbitration decision.

(7) If a dispute or claim involves an alleged injury or damage to which the church's insurance applies, and if the church's insurer refuses to submit to mediation or arbitration as described in this section, either the church or the member alleging the injury or damage may declare that this section is no longer binding with regard to that part of the dispute or claim to which the church's insurance applies.

D. Continuation of Church Discipline

Church discipline shall be carried out according to the Guidelines for Church Discipline developed by the Board of Elders.

Just as a good shepherd will go after a sheep that has wandered from the flock (Matt. 18:12-14; Ezek. 34:4,8,16), so shall the Elders and members of this church seek to restore a wandering member to the Lord through Biblical discipline. Therefore, discipline may be instituted or continued either before or after a member seeks to withdraw from membership if the Board of Elders determines that such discipline may serve to guard and preserve the honor of God, protect the purity of the church, or restore the wandering

member to the Lord. While the church cannot force a withdrawing person to remain in this congregation, the church has the right and the responsibility to encourage restoration, to bring the disciplinary process to an orderly conclusion, and to make a final determination as to the person's membership status at the time withdrawal is sought or acknowledged. In doing so, the Board of Elders, at its discretion, may temporarily suspend further disciplinary proceedings, dismiss any or all charges pending against the accused, or proceed with discipline and pronounce an appropriate censure.

E. Indemnification of Officers

1. The Board of Elders may choose to indemnify and advance the church-related expenses of any officer, employee, or agent of the church.
2. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 3. of this section, the church shall indemnify any Elder or deacon or former Elder or deacon of the church against claims, liabilities, expenses, and costs necessarily incurred by him in connection with the defense, compromise, or settlement of any action, suit or proceeding, civil or criminal, in which such person is made a party by reason of being or having been an Elder or deacon, to the extent not otherwise compensated, indemnified or reimbursed by insurance, if:
 - (1) The conduct of the Elder or Deacon was in good faith;
 - (2) The Elder or Deacon reasonably believed that his conduct was in the best interest of the church, or at least not opposed to its best interest;
 - (3) In the case of any criminal proceeding, the Elder or Deacon had no reasonable cause to believe that his conduct was unlawful; and
 - (4) The conduct of the Elder or Deacon was in the exercise of duties.
3. The church may not indemnify an Elder or Deacon in connection with a proceeding brought against him by or in the right of the church, in which he was adjudged liable to the church, or where the Elder or Deacon is charged with receiving an improper personal benefit and he is adjudged liable on that basis.

Article II - Church Oversight

Section 1: Concept

This church recognizes Christ as its Head and the Scriptures as its only authority (Colossians 1:18; 2 Timothy 3:16). Under that authority, the oversight of this church is vested in a body of Elders who operate in concert with the deacons and the congregation.

Section 2: The Elders

A. Authority and Responsibility – The Elders are responsible to guard the purity of church doctrine, to shepherd the flock, and to oversee church matters.

1. The Elders will ensure that the truths of the Bible are accurately taught and applied (Titus 1:9).
2. The Elders will minister to the needs of individuals and families through personal visitation, counseling, leading by example, teaching, discipline and restoration, and the general oversight of all church ministries.
3. The Elders will oversee all church matters. In particular, the Elders will act as the board of directors for the church corporation. They will be responsible to select the Chairman and any other needed officers and determine the functions of these officers.

4. Distinctions – Vocational Senior Pastor shall serve as an Elder with the non-vocational Elders.

5. The Chairman shall act as the official representative, spokesman, and signatory of GracePoint Church of Ephrata for all legal purposes.

B. Qualifications – Elders must be male voting members of GRACEPOINT. The candidate must be a member of GRACEPOINT in good standing for at least one year. An Elder must meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9; must aspire to the work of Elder, must be an active member of this church; believe in, support, and agree to abide by its constitution (including signing the Elder Affirmation of Faith statement of faith; and accept its bylaws and be affirmed by the congregation. Training will be provided for all new applicants and paired with a mentor.

C. Appointment - A vocational Senior pastor shall automatically become an Elder at the time of his appointment.

The Elders will identify qualified candidates to serve as Elders. Church members may submit names of candidates a minimum of sixty (60) days prior to the Annual Meeting in July. The Elders will evaluate each candidate by employing the “Qualification Tiers” chart and use of a “Timothy/Titus” questionnaire provided to the candidate’s family, Life Group, and co-workers at the Elders discretion, to see that he meets the standards of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. A candidate must ‘aspire’ to the work of Biblical oversight as another evidence of the Lord’s calling to the office (1 Timothy 3:1). The Elders will present candidates before the congregation, who will be given 30 days to show cause why any of the prospective Elders would not be qualified to serve. After considering any such congregational input, the Elders will present the names of candidates to the congregation for affirmation. For approval of a candidate, at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast must be in the affirmative.

D. Number – There is no limit on the number of Elders.

E. Term – The term for an Elder is four years, at which time the Elder can be presented to the congregation for affirmation to serve another four years. An Elder may take a sabbatical for a period of time for rest and renewal. An Elder may resign at any time by informing the Elders. If an Elder becomes unqualified or is unable to perform his Elder duties satisfactorily, the Elders may remove him. An Elder being considered for removal will not vote on the motion to remove himself. The Elders will inform the congregation when an Elder resigns or is removed.

F. Organization

1. Less than half of the Elders will be from the church staff. (A person on the church staff is one who is employed by the church and receives direct financial compensation for that employment.)
2. Following each Annual Congregational Meeting the Elders will select a chairman, vice-chairman and clerk from within the Board of Elders.
3. Following each Annual Congregational Meeting the Elders will designate ministry responsibilities so that all ministries will have Elder oversight.

G. Officers - The Elders annually will select non-staff Elders to serve as chairman, vice-chairman, and clerk.

1. The chairman will preside over meetings of the Board of Elders and over congregational business meetings.
2. The vice-chairman will assume the duties of the chairman in his absence.

3. The clerk will keep faithful records of all proceedings of the Elder meetings and of all congregational business meetings.

H. Meetings – The Elders and other committees will meet regularly as required. Meetings may be called at the request of any Elder provided that all members of the team are given adequate notice. For Elder meetings a simple majority (fifty percent [50%] plus one person) of the members of those bodies will constitute a quorum. All decisions of those bodies require unanimous consent of those present, consistent with the spirit of mutual submission as in Philippians 2:2-8.

Meetings shall be conducted with a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 3 – Deacons

A. Duties and Responsibilities – The deacons are responsible for assisting the Elders in the work of the ministry. Specific areas of service will be determined by the Elders.

B. Qualifications – A deacon must meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3:8-13; be a member of this church; believe in, support, and agree to abide by its constitution (including signing the *Elder Affirmation of Faith Statement of Faith*); and accept its bylaws.

C. Appointment – The process for nominating and approving deacons is the same as that for Elders.

D. Number – There is no limit on the number of deacons.

E. Term – The term of a deacon is consistent with that of an elder. The procedure for resignation or removal of a deacon is the same as that for an Elder.

Article III - Church Staff

Section 1 – Vocational Pastoral staff

A. Authority and Responsibilities - The principal responsibility is to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, primarily through the teaching of God's Word (Ephesians 4:11-12). Other responsibilities will be determined by the Elders in concert with the engiftments and skill sets of the pastors. The Senior pastor will serve as an Elder and member of the Elder team.

B. Qualifications – Pastoral staff will have the qualifications of an Elder. Other qualifications will be determined by the Elders.

C. Appointment - The Elders will be responsible to search for and screen candidates for the positions of pastor. The name of the candidate selected by the Elders will be presented to the congregation for approval at a regular or special business meeting. For approval of a candidate, at least two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast must be in the affirmative.

D. Term

1. Pastoral staff serve without term limits.
2. A pastor may discontinue his pastoral duties by submitting a letter of resignation to the Elders at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of the resignation.
3. If a pastor becomes unqualified or is unable to perform his pastoral duties satisfactorily, the Elders may remove him. The pastor in question will not vote with the other Elders on any recommendation for his removal.
4. The Elders will inform the congregation when a pastor resigns or is removed.
5. Resignation or dismissal from pastoral staff position will automatically include resignation from the Office of Elder, removal from the Elder Team, and relinquishment of the responsibilities of Elder, effective immediately.

E. Sabbatical Leave – The vocational pastoral staff shall have a 12-week sabbatical leave with every seven-years of service. The content and activity of the sabbatical will be at the discretion of the pastor on leave following consultation with the Elder team.

F. Support Process- While we use the term “vocation” in this document, GRACEPOINT believes that salaries are provided to support the ministries of the staff. Therefore, we do not view the vocational staff as employees, but co-ministers with the Elder Team. The Elder Team shall maintain a process by which salaries, and salary plans, are developed. Financial compensation, coming from a portion of the regular congregational giving, is provided to support their ministries with the following guidelines:

1. So as to honor the vocational staff; the financial provision conveying the congregation’s esteem, thoughtfulness, and loving concern.
2. Is at a level that is adequate to meet family living requirements.
3. Is appropriate to their level of experience and education.
4. Fosters a biblical and not a vocational philosophy of support.

Section 2 – Church Treasurer

A. Responsibilities - The treasurer will be responsible for oversight of the financial operation of the church, including required audits or reviews. He or she will ensure that proper records are maintained and that quarterly financial reports are made to the Elders and to the congregation.

B. Qualifications – Believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, strong accounting skills, and desire for the task.

C. Hiring will be within limits of the church budget.

Section 3 – Other Staff

A. Responsibilities, qualifications, hiring, and removal will be according to the discretion of the Elders.

B. Hiring will be within limits of the church budget.

Article IV – Church Ministries

Section 1 – Approval and Oversight

A. The Elders will approve and oversee all church ministries.

B. The Elders will approve any church support of parachurch organizations, missions, and other ministries external to the church and oversee the church’s ongoing relationships with these ministries.

Section 2 – Endorsement

The name of the church may be used as an endorsement of a ministry only after approval by the Elders.

Section 3: Financial Support

The Elders may approve church financial support of external ministry organizations or individuals.

Article V – Finances

Section 1 – Fiscal Year

The fiscal year will begin on August 1st and end on the following July 31st.

Section 2 – Budget

A. Budget Preparation and Approval - The Elders will be responsible to prepare a church budget in concert with ministry leaders, including support packages for church staff, for approval by the congregation prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

B. Budget Changes - The approved budget, both the overall total and amounts in any subtotals presented to and approved by the congregation, will be the ceiling on spending.

1. The budget will include a contingency item. The Elders may use funds in this item at their discretion to meet unforeseen expenses by either adjusting existing budget subtotals or establishing additional budget categories.

2. With congregational approval, the Elders may adjust the overall budget and/or amounts in any congregationally approved budget subtotals.

C. Quarterly budget reports shall be available to the congregation.

D. Budget Process. The Elder Team, or appointees designated by the Elders, shall meet with ministry leaders each year in order to solicit their input for that ministry's budget. The budget process will allow for sufficient time for review and input by the congregation before acting on the budget at the annual meeting in July.

Section 3 – Income

Normally church funds will be provided by freewill gifts. Restricted and designated gifts will be handled according to a policy maintained by the Elders. Other income may be received from Elder-approved activities. The receiving and handling of monies will be according to procedures approved by the Elders.

Section 4 – Spending Authority

A. During the Fiscal Year - The Elders have the authority to spend funds up to the amount approved by the congregation for any budget subtotal. This authority rests corporately in the Board of Elders but may be delegated as the Elders deem appropriate. In the event that a new budget is not approved until after the new fiscal year begins, monthly spending in the new fiscal year may not exceed average monthly income in the previous fiscal year until the new budget is approved.

B. Year-End Surplus Funds - Funds remaining at the end of a fiscal year will be allocated by the Elders.

Section 5 – Conflict of Interest

The Elders shall adopt a material conflict-of-interest policy that will provide for full disclosure of material conflicting interests by Elders, deacons, or church employees. This policy shall permit the Elders to determine whether a contemplated transaction may be authorized as just, fair, and reasonable to the church. Prior to action being taken or discussed in a meeting, any member may challenge any Elder, deacon, or vocational staff of the church as to whether a material conflict of interest exists. It shall be the decision of the challenged member, or the vote of the Elder Team, if the challenged member participates in the impending action.

Section 6 – Reports and Audits

The treasurer will make financial reports to the Elders as requested and to the congregation at least quarterly. A third party who is not currently dealing daily with the

finances of the church, or in close relationship with those who do, the church will audit or review the church financial records annually after the close of the fiscal year.

Section 7 – Contracts

The Elders, with congregational approval, may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the church, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of any on behalf of the church. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

Section 8 – Endowments

The Elders may establish on behalf of the church any endowments for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the church.

Article VI - Congregational Meetings

Section 1 – Conduct of Meetings

Meetings will be conducted according to the principle of mutual respect and the spirit of humility required by Philippians 2:2-8. An Elder policy, using a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order will specify a rule of order for structuring the meetings. Prior to the commencement of a congregational vote, the Elder Team or deacons shall take the roll of members present, and make every effort to ensure that only qualified members participate in the voting on any action.

Section 2 – Regulations Concerning Meetings

A. Quorum – At least twenty-five percent (25%) of active members constitute a quorum.

B. Notification – Notice of any congregational business meeting will be given at least two weeks prior to the meeting both from the pulpit on successive Sundays and by notices prominently posted around the church building. The Elders will notify the congregation by mail, at least two weeks before the meeting, of any meeting in which the congregation votes on calling a senior pastor; amending the articles of incorporation, constitution, or bylaws; merging or dissolving the church. As part of the two-week notification process, the Elders will provide sufficient information to the congregation to allow them to make an informed decision on recommendations from the Elders.

C. New Business – A member may submit new business items to any Elder at any time for consideration, evaluation and prayer by the Elders. New business brought to the floor of a business meeting will likewise be referred to the Elders.

D. Frequency of Meetings – Congregational meetings will be held to approve the annual budget and to provide an annual report to the congregation. The Elders may call other meetings at any time.

E. Required Vote – An affirmative vote by a simple majority is required for approval of a business item unless a larger majority is specified elsewhere in these bylaws.

Article VII – Settlement of Disputes

Any claim or dispute arising between church members, pastors, staff, and/or the church shall be settled by mediation following scriptural example. If resolution is not reached, legally binding Christian arbitration will be employed by the Elders or individuals selected by the Elders using a neutral arbitration service.

Article VIII – Merger

The Elders may call a special congregational meeting for the purpose of merging GracePoint Church of Ephrata with another church of like faith. Two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at the meeting must be in the affirmative to approve the merger.

Article IX – Ownership and Distribution of Property

The Elders may call a special congregational meeting for the purpose of dissolving GracePoint Church of Ephrata. All assets remaining after payment of liabilities will be distributed to another religious organization(s) of like faith. Two-thirds (2/3) of the votes cast at the meeting must be in the affirmative to dissolve the church and to approve distribution of the church assets.

A. The church shall hold, own, and enjoy its own personal and real property, without any right of reversion to another entity, except as provided in these Bylaws. Should the church decide to withdraw from Converge Northwest and Converge Worldwide (formerly Baptist General Conference), the church shall retain ownership of its property. Such withdrawal shall not be considered to be a dissolution.

B. “Dissolution” means the complete disbanding of the church so that it no longer functions as a congregation or as a corporate entity. Upon the dissolution of the church, its property shall be applied and distributed as follows: (1) all liabilities and obligations of the church shall be paid and discharged or adequate provision shall be made therefore; (2) assets held by the church upon condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance, which condition occurs by reason of the dissolution, shall be returned, transferred, or conveyed in accordance with such requirements; (3) assets received and not held upon a condition requiring return, transfer, or conveyance by reason of the dissolution, shall be transferred or conveyed to one or more domestic or foreign corporations, societies, or organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the responding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), and are engaged in activities substantially similar to those of the corporation; this distribution shall **be done pursuant to a plan** adopted by the Board of Elders, provided that no assets are distributed to any organization governed by a member of the Board of Elders; and (4) any assets not otherwise disposed of shall be disposed of by a court of competent jurisdiction of the county in which the principal office of the corporation is then located, for such purposes and to such organizations as said court shall determine.

Article X - Amendments

Upon the recommendation of the Elders, these bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of church voting members present at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose.

Article XI - Review

These by-laws of GracePoint Church of Ephrata will be reviewed and evaluated by the Elders every three (3) years beginning in 2012.

- First Baptist Church of Ephrata Washington was organized on Sunday, October 5, 1947.
- First Baptist Church of Ephrata Washington was incorporated in the State of Washington, No. 109623.
- Constitution adopted November 25, 1947.
- Constitution revised: January 27, 1965; second revision, March 17, 1971.
- New Constitution adopted February 14, 1979.
- Constitution revised: February 13, 1980; second revision, February 23, 1987; third revision November 19, 1990.
- New Constitution adopted February 8, 1998; amended April 2, 2000; revised April 7, 2002; revised April 25, 2004. All previously adopted constitutions and revisions shall hereby be invalid.
- New Constitution adopted February 15, 2009. All previously adopted constitutions and revisions shall hereby be invalid.
- Constitution revised: February 8, 2015. Name changed to GracePoint Church
- Constitution Review: Reviewed in 2018 with no requested changes.
- Constitution revised: April 10, 2022.

I, the undersigned Chairman of GracePoint Church of Ephrata, do hereby certify that the above constitution and bylaws were adopted on 18 April 2022 by the members at a duly called meeting and that this constitution and bylaws are current and in operation as of that date.

Kevin Guinn

Chairman

GracePoint Church of Ephrata

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