

**By-Laws Of
Grace Evangelical Congregational Church
15 Earl Stoyer Drive
Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania 17972**

**Article I
Name & Location**

The name of this church is Grace Evangelical Congregational Church, 15 Earl Stoyer Drive Schuylkill Haven, Pennsylvania. The affairs of this corporation shall be regulated in accordance with the Creed, Ritual and Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

**Article II
Mission & Vision**

Section 1. Mission The mission of Grace Church is threefold. We worship the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (Psalm 117) Empowered by the Holy Spirit we offer Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to our community and through missions to the world. (Acts 1:8) We work to see God's people mature in their relationship with Him. (II Timothy 2:15)

Section 2. Vision The vision of Grace Church is also threefold. We provide a worship experience which will allow people of all ages the opportunity to meet God. Evangelism is the ultimate goal of all of our programs and ministries. Discipleship, not evangelism will be the completion of our task on earth.

**Article III
Membership**

Section 1. The membership of this corporation shall consist of the persons whose names are found on its official church record.

Section 2. Manner of Admittance: All persons seeking membership in Grace Church shall show their interest and sincerity by regular attendance in the worship services for at least two months prior to their application for church membership, and must give testimony to a personal Grace in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord to both the pastor and membership committee. All applicants for church membership must also participate in a membership class. All recommendations for church membership shall be submitted by the pastor to the Ministry Council for approval. Applicants for church membership must also have the endorsement of the Church Membership Committee.

Section 3. Manner of Reception: After meeting the above requirements applicants shall be received by Profession of Faith in accordance with the ritual of the Evangelical Congregational Church. (Evangelical Congregational Church Discipline- Article 321.5)

Section 4. Exceptions: Exceptions to the prescribed manner of admittance into membership may be granted by the Ministry Council if the prospective member is transferring to Grace Church from another Evangelical Congregational Church or if personal circumstances prevent an applicant from completing the prescribed manner of admittance into membership.

Section 5. Members In Good Standing. Members are in good standing if they attend the worship services, live in harmony with the Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church, partake of the Holy Communion at least once during the preceding 12 months, and support the Church financially as God prospers them.

Section 6. Service. It is expected that the members of Grace Church who are able to serve will be willing to accept opportunities of service through the ministry of Grace Church in accordance with the spiritual gift(s) which have been given to them.

Section 7. Removal From Membership. Removal of membership from the roll shall follow the procedure stipulated in the Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church. The membership rolls shall be reviewed at least every three years. Upon that review, members deemed as inactive shall be contacted in regards to their membership intentions.

Section 8. Transfer of Membership. Any member in good standing desiring to transfer his membership from Grace Church to another church shall, upon his request, be granted a letter of transfer. A letter of transfer can not be denied a member in good standing.

Article IV Congregational Meetings

Section 1. Annual Meeting The Annual Congregational Meeting shall be held in accordance with article 323.1 and 323.2 of the *Discipline* of the Evangelical Congregational Church.

Section 2. Special Meetings Special Congregational Meetings may be called at any time by a majority of the Ministry Council; or upon petition by five members of the Ministry Council; or by the Pastor; or upon petition signed by 15 members of the congregation in good standing, specifying the purpose of such a meeting. No business shall be transacted at a special meeting except that for which the meeting was called and which must be mentioned in the call.

Section 3. Notification Of Annual/Special Meetings All Congregational Meetings, regular and special shall be announced at a public service and posted in the Church Bulletin on two successive Sundays preceding the meeting.

Section 4. Presiding Over Annual/Special Meetings The pastor, the president of the ministry council, or the vice president of the ministry council, shall preside in that order at all regular or special meetings of the congregation.

Section 5. Secretary Of Annual/Special Meetings The Secretary of the Ministry Council shall serve as secretary at all regular and special congregational meetings. If the Secretary is unable to serve, a secretary pro tem shall be appointed from among those members present.

Section 6. Quorum For Annual/Special Meetings Twenty five members of the congregation in good standing shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. The president of the Ministry Council in conference with the chairman of the congregational meeting shall determine the number of eligible voting members there are prior to the Congregational Meeting.

Section 7. Submission Of Reports At the Annual Congregational Meeting, reports of the Pastor(s), Pastoral Assistant, Youth Director, Church Treasurer, the Ministry Council, and the commissions of the Church shall be submitted in writing.

Section 8. Voting Rights All members in attendance, 16 years of age and over, in good standing are entitled to vote, except in property negotiations and other legal matters which are otherwise provided for in the Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church. In such cases those voting must be of legal age.

Section 9. Agenda Of The Annual Meeting The following shall constitute guidelines for the order of business:

- A. Devotional Period
- B. Review of the minutes of the last Annual Meeting and the minutes of all Special Congregational Meetings which have taken place since the last annual meeting.
- C. Receipt of communications
- D. Elections
- D. Reports of special committees
- E. Report of the Pastor(s)
- F. Report of the Pastoral Assistant.
- G. Report of the Youth Director
- H. Report of the Ministry Council
- I. Report of the Church Treasurer
- J. Reports of the Commissions
- K. Report of Annual Audit
- L. Old Business
- M. New Business
- O. Reading of the minutes for adoption
- P. Adjournment with prayer.

Article V Ministry Council

Section 1. Membership The Membership of the Council is composed of:

All full time pastors
Director of the Discipleship Commission
Director of the Fellowship & Service Commission
Director of the Operations Commission
Director of the Outreach Commission
Director of the Stewardship Commission
Director of the Worship Commission
President of the Corporation
Vice President
Lay Delegate
Alternate Lay Delegate
Treasurer
Secretary

Section 2. Membership Limit No person shall serve at the same time in more than one of these positions.

Section 3. Meetings The Ministry Council shall meet on the second Tuesday of each month. The Ministry Council has the authority to adjust this schedule of meetings as needed. The president, vice president, pastor(s), or a majority of the Ministry Council may call special meetings. A quorum shall be 2/3 of the membership of the Ministry Council. The president of

the Ministry Council shall be included in the quorum, but shall vote only to break ties. All regular Ministry Council meetings shall be open to the congregation.

Section 4. Responsibilities The Ministry Council shall be the governing body of the congregation. Its responsibilities include:

- A. Oversight of all business for the congregation.
- B. Strategic and tactical planning, coordination and oversight.
- C. Coordination of the work of the commissions.
- D. Preliminary budget approval.
- E. Determine the pastor's salary.
- F. Accept the ministry funds request ascribed to it by the National Conference.
- G. Oversight of annual audits of church and financial records.
- H. Establish special committees.
- I. Review the membership rolls
- J. Hiring and firing of all church employees, except the pastor(s)
- K. Perform other duties as the congregation may direct.

Section 5. Expenditures The Ministry Council may make expenditures as outlined within the church budget. The Ministry Council may not exceed the church budget in any budget category by more than \$3,000 without congregational approval. If the need for an expenditure arises which exceeds the church budget in any budget category by more than \$3,000 and which by its nature cannot wait for a regularly called Special Congregational Meeting the Ministry Council may approve said expenditure.

Article VI Executive Committee

Section 1. Membership The Executive Committee shall consist of the pastor(s), the Lay Delegate, the Ministry Council president who shall preside at meetings, the Ministry Council vice president, the Treasurer and the Ministry Council secretary.

Section 2. Duties The Executive Committee shall perform all duties referred to it by the Ministry Council and any matters needing attention between Ministry Council meetings. The Executive Committee shall be responsible to provide for the supervision of the church secretary. The Executive Committee will also serve as the group the pastor(s) consults concerning any financial benevolence or assistance provided by Grace Church.

Article VII Commissions and Committees

Section 1. Directors of Commissions Each Commission of the ministry of the Church is charged to a director. Each director is a member of the Council.

Section 2. Election Directors shall be elected annually by the Ministry Council following the procedures outlined by the Council. They shall be members in good standing as defined in the DISCIPLINE. They shall be elected for one-year terms and shall be limited to five consecutive

terms in that directorship. In the event of a vacancy, the Council shall appoint an interim director until the next election.

Section 3. Composition of Commissions All Commissions shall be composed of representatives selected by and from the Committees within the Commission, the Commission Director, and the supervising pastor as appointed by the Council. All voting members of a commission must be members in good standing.

Section 4. Pastor's Commission Participation The pastor is a member of the commissions as noted. He shall be informed of all commission meetings. He shall receive the minutes of all commission meetings.

Section 5. Commission Meetings. The commissions shall meet as determined by the commission or as directed by the Ministry Council. A quorum for commission meetings shall be a majority of the commission members.

Article VIII Connectional Ministries Commission

Section 1. Director The Connectional Ministries Commission shall be charged with a director who is to oversee the work of the Commission, and coordinate the work between commissions and committees.

Section 2. Responsibilities The Connectional Ministries Commission shall be responsible for seeking to connect guests, new members, and current members with the mission, vision, and ministries of Grace Church by the following:

- A. Oversee the work of the Ushers and help organize a schedule for the Welcome Team to ensure someone is there to welcome people as they arrive.
- B. Help create and maintain a plan to ensure people are in place for intentionally engaging guests, helping the pastor with follow-up, and going over the "connection cards" received from guests.
- C. Organize and schedule, in conjunction with the pastor(s), a Visitation Team for visiting the shut-in, homebound, and possible hospital needs of members.
- D. Help organize and keep the weekly prayer list and Prayer Circle up to date.
- E. Work with the Church office on maintaining and periodically updating a church directory.
- F. Work with the pastor(s) and church office on the communication efforts of the church through a welcome table, announcements, inserts, bulletins, and mailings.
- G. Help the pastor(s) with the Grace Connection Class for new members.
- H. Manage Meal Ministry as needed.

Article IX Operations Commission

Section 1. Director The Operations Commission shall be charged with a director who is to oversee the work of the Commission, and coordinate the work between commissions and committees.

Section 2. Responsibilities The Operations Commission shall be responsible for the stewardship of all church property, including:

- A. Managing church property, including maintenance, management, security, repairs improvements, insurance, etc.
- B. Providing for the supervision of the church custodian.
- C. The Operations Commission may spend up to \$5,000 on any one item without the approval of the Ministry Council.
- D. Expenditures of more than \$5,000 must be approved by the congregation unless they are used for emergency repairs.

Article X Outreach Commission

Section 1. Director The Outreach Commission shall be charged with a director who is to oversee the work of the Commission, and coordinate the work between commissions and committees.

Section 2. Responsibilities

- A. The Outreach Commission shall be responsible to implement strategies for evangelism within both the congregation and the community.
- B. To review the membership rolls of the church- See Article 3 Section 7
- C. To serve as the membership committee
- D. The Outreach Commission shall promote and oversee every aspect of home and overseas mission involvement of the church, including mission education for all ages, prayer strategies, financial support, routine communication with the congregation about missionaries we support, scheduling of periodic missionary speakers, and the conducting of mission groups and projects as these relate to the denomination's Division of Missions guidelines for local church involvement.

Article XI Discipleship Commission

Section 1. Director The Discipleship Commission shall be charged with a director who is to oversee the work of the Commission, and coordinate the work between commissions and committees.

Section 2. Responsibilities The Discipleship Commission shall be responsible to structure and oversee all discipleship ministries for Grace Church. These ministries shall include the Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Junior Church, Bible Club, Church Library, Plays and Pageants, Twin Pines Camping, Teacher Training, Care Groups, Specific Discipleship Programming and all Children and Youth Ministries which take place outside of Sunday School.

Article XII
Fellowship and Service Commission

Section 1. Director The Fellowship and Service Commission shall be charged with a director who is to oversee the work of the Commission, and coordinate the work between commissions and committees.

Section 2. Responsibilities The Fellowship and Service Commission shall be responsible for the service-oriented work of the church. It shall hold fellowship events; provide child care as needed, conduct kitchen-related fund raising events, support the work and projects of other commissions when requested. The commission shall supervise the operation of the kitchen.

Article XIII
Worship Commission

Section 1. Director The Worship Commission shall be charged with a director who is to oversee the work of the Commission, and coordinate the work between commissions and committees.

Section 2. Responsibilities The Worship Commission shall plan and implement all worship events that will glorify the Lord and provide spiritual enrichment for the entire congregation. This commission shall also oversee the ministry of ushers, greeters, communion volunteers, worship leaders, choirs, music for worship and special music. Additionally, this commission shall be responsible to provide supervision for the organist and choir director. Finally, this commission shall have the responsibility of coordinating the leadership for the Wednesday Evening Prayer and Praise Service.

Article XIV
Pastoral Relations Committee

Section 1. Membership The members of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall be all the pastors assigned by the Conference, the Lay Delegate, President of the Ministry Council, and at least three other members. It shall not consist of less than five (5) members, plus the pastor(s). Additional members may be added when necessary and appropriate, but there shall always be an odd number and provided that only one member of an immediate family shall be permitted to serve on the Committee.

Section 2. Meetings The Pastoral Relations Committee shall meet at least every three months on a date of its choosing.

Section 3. Responsibilities The Pastoral Relations Committee shall aid the pastor(s) and all pastoral assistants to effectively serve the needs and programs of the local congregation, and function according to the rules of the National Conference.

- A. It shall be a counseling body with the pastoral staff.
- B. It shall act on behalf of the congregation in the selection of a new pastor.
- C. Conduct a yearly review of the pastor(s)'s job performance.
- D. Provide a recommendation of the pastor(s)'s salary and other compensation to the Ministry Council.

Article XV Nominating Committee

Section 1. Membership The members of the Nominating Committee shall be a full time pastor, a past Ministry Council member (preferably a past president) and a member-at-large, preferably not a current Ministry Council Member. The member-at-large shall be selected by the Council from the church Membership.

Section 2. Responsibilities The Nominating Committee shall prepare a slate of nominees for all positions to be elected by the congregational membership or the Local Conference (i.e. the Ministry Council), acquiring the consent of all nominees to serve before placing their names in nomination.

Section 3. Nominations from the Congregation Members of the congregation may offer names to the Nominating Committee for their consideration prior to the congregational meeting. There shall be no nominations from the floor during the annual meeting.

Article XVI Officers

Section 1. Officers. The officers of the Corporation shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Lay Delegate, and Alternate Lay Delegate, all of whom are members of the Council. No person shall serve at the same time in more than one of these offices.

Section 2. Election. The Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate shall be elected for one-year terms by the Local Conference no later than March 31. The other officers shall be elected by the Membership for one-year terms at the Annual Meeting.

Section 3. Qualifications All officers shall be members in good standing as defined in the DISCIPLINE and shall be at least eighteen years of age.

Section 3. Terms of Office. All officers shall be elected for one-year terms and except for Lay Delegate, Alternate Lay Delegate, and Treasurer shall be limited to five consecutive terms in that office. They may be re-elected to the same office after having been out of that office for at least one year.

Section 4. Vacancies. Vacancies in the offices of Lay Delegate and Alternate Lay Delegate shall be filled for the balance of the term by the Local Conference. All vacancies in other offices shall be filled by the Council until the next Annual meeting.

Article XVII Employments

Section 1. Church employees, other than the pastor(s), shall be hired and terminated by the Ministry Council. The commissions shall supervise and direct the employees under their jurisdiction, and shall be responsible to search for and recommend candidates for employment to the Ministry Council, establish salaries, write job descriptions, evaluate performance and otherwise manage the employee.

Article XVIII
Church Treasurer

Section 1. Election See Article XVII.

Section 2. Responsibilities The Treasurer shall:

- A. Keep a careful record of all receipts and expenditures, and issue checks in payment of all bills and salaries.
- B. Present a statement of receipts and expenditures each month in a report at the monthly Ministry Council Meeting and provide the monthly treasurer's reports to each member of the Ministry Council.
- C. Present an annual report at the Annual Congregational Meeting.
- D. Ensure that at the end of the fiscal year the church financial records for that fiscal year shall be stored at an appropriate place in the church.
- E. Ensure the financial records of the church receive an annual auditing.
- F. The Treasurer shall serve as the chairperson of the Finance Committee.

Article XIX
Amendments

Section 1. Any amendments to these By-laws not inconsistent with the Discipline of the Evangelical Congregational Church can be adopted by two-thirds vote of the qualified voting members present at any duly called congregational meeting. All proposed amendments shall first be presented in writing to the Pastor and the Chairperson of the Ministry Council. Proper notification of the proposed change shall be presented to every member of the congregation, when possible, at least one month before said meeting of the congregation.

Article XX
References To Pastoral Leadership

All references to pastor(s) in these by-laws refer to the pastor(s) of this congregation duly assigned to this congregation by the Evangelical Congregational Church.