



PENINSULA GRACE CHURCH

Vision and By-Laws

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VISION STATEMENT

Mission: (*What are we doing? What is our purpose?*)

Presenting everyone complete in Christ (Colossians 1:28)

- “Complete” or Mature: Ephesians 4:13-16

Vision: (*Where is God taking us?*)

A Gospel-centered community reproducing disciples of Jesus

- **Gospel-centered:** 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 1 Corinthians 2:2
- **Community:** Acts 2:42-47, Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Corinthians 12, John 17:21
- **Reproducing disciples:** Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Timothy 2:2
 - Definition of a disciple:
 - A learner; a follower of Jesus. Becoming like Jesus by the power of the Holy Spirit and His Word, and making other disciples who make disciple makers
 - “Follow me and I will make you fishers of men” – following Jesus (head – know Him as Savior/Lord) being changed by Jesus (heart – becoming like Him, “I will make you”) and being committed to the mission of Jesus (hands/feet – fishers of men)

Map/Strategy: (*How do we do this? What’s the plan?*) By...

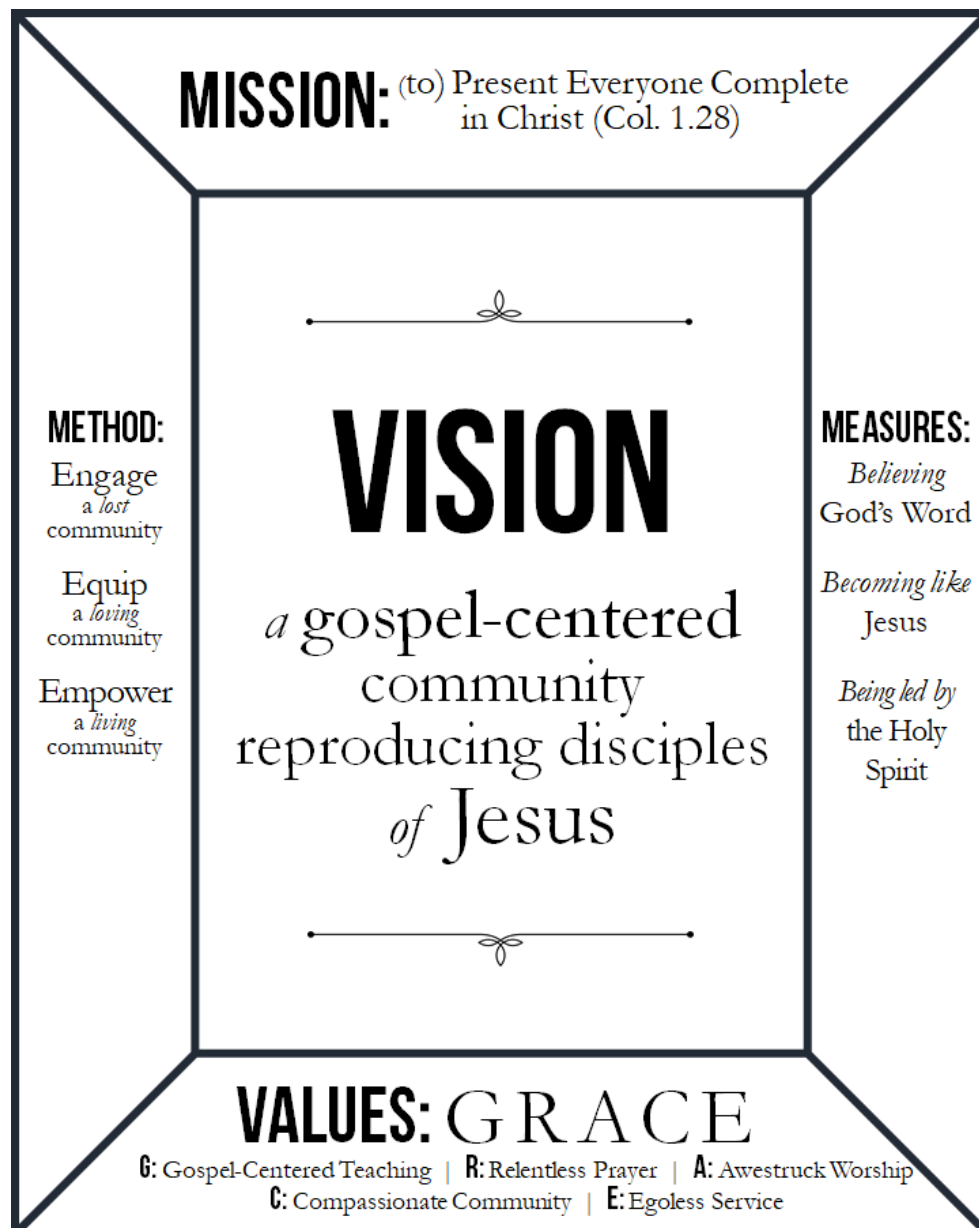
- ...**engaging** a lost community
 - Matthew 28:19, Matthew 5:16, 1 Peter 3:15, Luke 19:10
- ...**equipping** a loving community
 - Ephesians 4:11-13
- ...**empowering** a living community
 - 1 Corinthians 11:1 (imitate me as I imitate Christ)
 - 2 Timothy 2:2, 3:10
 - Be a Barnabas, Pursue a Paul, Train and Timothy (Someone you are discipling, someone you are being disciplined by, and someone you are discipling with – a peer)

Marks/Measures: (*What does such a person look like? How do we know if someone is following Jesus?*)

- **Believing God’s Word** (head)
 - Romans 10:9-10, John 6:29, 1 Thessalonians 2:13
- **Becoming Like Jesus** (heart)
 - Romans 8:28-30, 2 Corinthians 3:18, 1 John 3:2, Philippians 2:5-8
- **Being Led by the Holy Spirit** (hands/feet)
 - Galatians 5:16-18, 22-23, Romans 8:12-17, John 14:26, 16:13

Motives/Values: (*Why are we doing this? What do we value?*) **GRACE**

- **G – Gospel-Centered Teaching** (Colossians 1:27)
- **R – Relentless Prayer** (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- **A – Awestruck Worship** (Romans 11:33)
- **C – Compassionate Community** (John 13:34)
- **E – Egoless Service** (John 13:1-17)



BY-LAWS

ARTICLE I — NAME AND ADDRESS

The name of this church shall be PENINSULA GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH, DBA Peninsula Grace Church, of 44175 Kalifornsky Beach Road, Soldotna, Alaska 99669.

ARTICLE II — COVENANT

The covenant by which this church exists as a distinct body, and which every member accepts, is as follows:

Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, and submitting to the authority of the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship, the enjoyment of Christian ordinances, the public worship of God and the advancement of His church on earth, we do now, in the sight of God and invoking His blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, as warranted by the Word of God.

We agree to maintain the teaching and preaching of the Word of God, to submit ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of the church and to walk together in brotherly love.

This we do depending on the aid of our Heavenly Father, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation, and of Jesus Christ who has redeemed us with His blood, and of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide.

ARTICLE III — STATEMENT OF FAITH

The "Statement of Faith" which this church shall embrace, preach and defend is specifically set forth as follows:

An Introduction to the Charis Commitment to Common Identity

History

The Charis Movement, comprised of leaders and churches commonly known as Grace Brethren, traces its family roots back to Germany, where in 1708 a small group of sincere Christ-followers committed to form a church that would be faithful to the teachings of the New Testament. Yet we recognize that our spiritual foundations are built upon the broader work of godly men and women throughout history who have faithfully labored to interpret and apply God's truth. While different expressions of our beliefs have been drafted throughout our history, we have consistently affirmed our unwavering loyalty to Jesus Christ, the Living Word, and to Holy Scripture, the Written Word, as our final authority in all matters of faith and practice.

Throughout the centuries, our movement has known glorious times of progress and sad times of distraction over secondary issues. By the grace of God, today we are a global family of churches that shares a common commitment to understanding the Word of God (Biblical truth), to living as the People of God (Biblical relationships), and, to fulfilling the Purposes of God (Biblical mission). This threefold commitment is shared throughout the geographically and culturally diverse congregations that identify with us.

Format

The *Charis Commitment to Common Identity* is a summary of our biblical convictions, mutual commitments, and common practices. It is not intended to be a *complete expression* of what we believe and practice, nor is it intended to be the *final expression* of those beliefs and practices. Rather, it is a *current expression* of our ongoing quest to apply the unchanging

truth of God's Word to the constantly changing realities and needs of our world. It is formatted around three "clusters" as follows:

1. **The Center** affirms our eternal loyalty to Jesus Christ, through whom we live and move and have our being;
2. **The Evangelical Core** outlines the convictions we share with those in the stream of historic orthodoxy and global evangelical communities that possess a high view of God and the Scriptures;
3. **The Charis Identity** summarizes the perspectives and practices shared among Grace Brethren churches and leaders around the world.

Uses

We encourage our leaders and churches to use this document in the following ways:

1. **To encourage** the next generation to understand, identify and engage together with us;
2. **To train** new disciples to grow and serve among us;
3. **To orient** those disciples who may wish to join us;
4. **To strengthen** the understanding and convictions of our leaders and members;
5. **To help** us relate appropriately to those with whom we form partnerships;
6. **To discern** which churches or groups of churches should form a part of our global movement.

We believe that any written document is a creation of man, and must be subject to continual discussion and improvement as we grow in our understanding of the Bible, which alone is the unchanging Word of God, as we seek to apply the Bible to our changing cultural context.

At the annual meeting in 2016 of the Charis Fellowship, delegates unanimously accepted an invitation to become a charter member of the global Charis Alliance. In 2017, they decided that the Charis Commitment to Common Identity be endorsed as the identity statement of the Charis Fellowship. They recommended that it be used by our member churches, by Inspire (Charis Pastors Network), by our national and cooperating organizations, and by districts to train leaders and to communicate and explain our movement.

Our Commitment to Common Identity

1. The Center

We declare that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God¹ as revealed in the Bible, the written Word of God,² is the only Savior and Lord.³ He is the center of our shared experience of true biblical unity.

2. The Evangelical Core

We affirm our commitment to the following core truths of the Bible which we share with other genuine believers in Jesus Christ:

1. **The One True God** - There is one, and only one, true God,⁴ the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁵ He is the Creator and Lord of all,⁶ existing eternally in three persons, never less and never more - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.⁷
2. **The Lord Jesus Christ** - Jesus Christ is fully God, existing eternally.⁸ Everything was created by Him and for Him.⁹ His incarnation took place in the womb of a virgin.¹⁰ He became man,¹¹ but never sinned.¹² He died a substitutionary death to atone for sin,¹³ resurrected bodily,¹⁴ and ascended into heaven where He remains fully God and fully man,¹⁵ and is presently ministering¹⁶ until He comes again.¹⁷
3. **The Holy Spirit** - The Holy Spirit is fully God, existing eternally.¹⁸ He is a person,¹⁹ and was involved in Creation²⁰ and the inspiration of Scripture.²¹ His works of

- 1 John 1:1-14
- 2 Matthew 5:17-18; 2 Timothy 3:16;
- 3 2 Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 19:7-11
John 14:6; Acts 4:12;
- 4 1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:9; Philippians 2:9-11
- 5 Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 43:10;
- 6 1 Corinthians 8:4-6; 1 Timothy 2:5
- 7 Matthew 22:32; Acts 3:13
Genesis 1:1; Psalm 146:6;
- 8 John 1:3; Colossians 1:16,17
Matthew 28:19; Luke 3:22;
- 9 2 Corinthians 13:14
John 1:1-3; John 8:58;
- 10 Titus 2:13
Romans 11:36;
- 11 Colossians 1:16
- 12 John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23;
- 13 Luke 1:29-35
- 14 Luke 2:52; John 19:28;
- 15 Philippians 2:6-8
- 16 Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22
- 17 Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21;
- 18 1 Peter 2:24,25
- 19 Luke 24:36-43; Romans 1:4;
- 20 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
- 21 Acts 1:9; Hebrews 4:14
- 22 Ephesians 1:19-23;
- 23 Hebrews 4:15,16
- 24 Acts 1:11
- 25 Acts 5:3,4

convicting²² and regenerating²³ are essential to the believer's salvation. Believers are entitled to the benefit and joy of being filled²⁴ and walking in the Spirit²⁵ for empowerment in Christian life, service, and mission.²⁶

4. **The Bible** - The sixty-six books, and only these, known as the Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God.²⁷ God's inspiration and superintendence of the writing of every word of the Bible²⁸ guarantees that what was written is His Word and therefore authoritative, true, and without error in the original manuscripts.²⁹ God preserves His Word,³⁰ which is powerful and effective to accomplish His purpose of salvation among all nations.³¹ God's Spirit illumines the minds of believers in every culture to understand and apply the unchanging truth of Scripture in fresh and relevant ways for the benefit of the whole Body of Christ.³²
5. **Humanity** - God created man and woman in His image.³³ As a result, all people are bearers of that image.³⁴ However, Adam's subsequent sin resulted in a condition of spiritual death³⁵ which all people since Adam have experienced,³⁶ marring the beauty of God's image in them in every facet of life. This condition of spiritual death³⁷ has rendered all people unable to save themselves,³⁸ and leads to physical death.³⁹ Therefore, new birth is necessary for salvation.⁴⁰
6. **Salvation** - The salvation brought by God is a complete and eternal salvation by His grace alone, received as the free gift of God through personal faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, as He declares believers righteous in Him.⁴¹
7. **Church** - There exists one true Church, which is called the Household of God,⁴² the Body of Christ,⁴³ and the Temple of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁴ It is comprised of all true disciples of Jesus Christ and is created by the action of the Holy Spirit.⁴⁵ Tangible expressions of this true Church are found in local churches.⁴⁶
8. **Christian Life** - The believer is saved by faith alone.⁴⁷ The faith that saves is expected to produce obedience⁴⁸ and good works,⁴⁹ which are the products of the indwelling Holy Spirit.⁵⁰ The dimensions of biblical ethics are both individual and social, and extend to every facet of life.⁵¹ God faithfully continues to finish the work of sanctification, which He initiated in the life of each believer⁵² with the goal of Christlikeness.⁵³
9. **Angels, Satan, Demons** - God created a multitude of spiritual beings called "angels".⁵⁴ Righteous angels continue to serve God and work both in the heavenly sphere and on earth.⁵⁵ By his disobedience, Satan, a fallen angel, became the adversary of God and God's people,⁵⁶ carrying with him a procession of demons.⁵⁷ Jesus Christ has overcome Satan⁵⁸ so that the final judgment and doom of Satan and his demons are certain.⁵⁹
10. **Future Life** - The dead will have a conscious existence in eternity⁶⁰ and their bodies will be resurrected.⁶¹ Unbelievers, already under condemnation, will be sentenced to suffer eternal separation from God.⁶² Believers, already having been granted eternal life,⁶³ will be judged and rewarded according to their works,⁶⁴ and will experience a glorified, eternal existence in the presence of the Lord.⁶⁵

21 John 16:7-15
 22 Genesis 1:2
 23 2 Peter 1:21
 24 John 16:8-11
 25 Titus 3:5
 26 Ephesians 5:18
 Galatians 5:16
 27 Galatians 5:22-23;
 28 Ephesians 3:16-21; Acts 1:8
 29 Luke 24:25-27; 1 Peter 1:23-25
 30 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20,21
 31 Psalm 19:7-11
 Psalm 119:89; Psalm 119:160
 32 Romans 1:16; Romans 10:8-17;
 Romans 16:25-27
 33 1 Corinthians 2:9-16;
 34 Ephesians 1:17-23
 35 Genesis 1:26-28
 36 James 3:9
 37 Genesis 3:1-24
 38 Romans 5:12,19
 39 Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-3
 40 Romans 8:6-8
 41 Genesis 2:17; Romans 5:12
 John 1:12; John 3:3-5
 Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:4-9;
 42 Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:18-21;
 Hebrews 9:12; Hebrews 10:14
 43 1 Peter 4:17; Ephesians 2:19,20;
 1 Timothy 3:14,15
 44 1 Corinthians 12:27;
 Ephesians 1:22,23
 45 1 Corinthians 3:16;
 46 Ephesians 1:21,22
 1 Corinthians 12:13
 Hebrews 10:25; Galatians
 1:2; Romans 16:4,5;
 47 Revelation 2:1,8,12,18;
 Revelation 3:1,7,14
 49 Romans 4:5
 50 Romans 1:5
 51 49 James 2:14-17; Titus 3:8
 Galatians 5:22,23
 52 Matthew 22:37-40;
 Colossians 3:17
 53 Philippians 1:6;
 Philippians 2:12-13
 Romans 8:29;
 2 Corinthians 3:18
 54 Daniel 7:10; Hebrews 12:22
 55 Hebrews 1:14; Ephesians 1:21;
 Ephesians 3:10
 56 1 Peter 5:8,9;
 Revelation 12:1-10
 57 Ephesians 6:12
 58 1 John 3:8
 59 John 12:31; Romans 16:20;
 Revelation 2:10
 60 Philippians 1:21-23;
 Luke 16:19-31
 61 John 5:28,29
 62 Matthew 25:46;
 Revelation 20:15
 63 John 3:16; John 6:47
 64 Romans 14:10-12;
 1 Corinthians 3:10-15;
 2 Corinthians 5:10
 65 1 Thessalonians 4:17;
 Revelation 21:3-5; Psalm 16:11

3. Our Charis Identity: The Shared Commitments of our Global Movement

A Summary of Additional Commitments to Biblical Truth

1. We seek to understand the intent of each biblical writer by using grammatical, historical, and contextual principles of interpretation,⁶⁶ focused on Christ, led by the Holy Spirit,⁶⁷ and oriented by grace. We accept the absolute authority of the Bible rather than that of creeds, traditions, or leaders.⁶⁸

66 Matthew 5:18; Luke 24:25-27
 67 1 Corinthians 2:14
 68 1 Corinthians 4:6
 69 Acts 17:11; 2 Timothy 2:15;
 1 Chronicles 12:32

2. We commit to an ongoing study, understanding and application of God's unchanging truth in our constantly changing world, whether personal, social or cultural.⁶⁹
3. We affirm that true believers put their trust in Jesus Christ and are kept forever in the saving grace of God through His promises and His power.⁷⁰ Every believer has been eternally justified,⁷¹ blessed with all spiritual blessings,⁷² and set free from all condemnation.⁷³
4. We affirm that the Holy Spirit's works of baptizing,⁷⁴ sealing⁷⁵ and indwelling⁷⁶ occur simultaneously with regeneration and are the possession of every true believer. The Holy Spirit gives each believer a unique combination of spiritual gifts for the purpose of serving God and people.⁷⁷
5. We affirm that Jesus Christ gave ordinances to the church: Baptism testifies to the reality of our salvation and identifies us as disciples of the Triune God. We therefore encourage the practice of triune immersion.⁷⁸ Communion testifies to our justification, sanctification and glorification, which are accomplished through Jesus Christ. We therefore encourage the practice of these symbols: the bread and cup, the washing of feet and the sharing of a meal.⁷⁹
6. We encourage the practice of additional biblical symbolic actions, such as anointing with oil and prayer for the sick,⁸⁰ laying on of hands for ministry,⁸¹ etc.
7. We affirm that the Church began on a particular day of Pentecost when our ascended Lord sent His Spirit to the waiting disciples.⁸² The present Church age will come to an end when our Lord comes in the air to remove His Church from the earth⁸³ and fulfill His promises to Israel.⁸⁴ The second coming of Christ is the personal, physical, and visible return from heaven of Christ to earth⁸⁵ with His Church,⁸⁶ to establish His thousand-year reign⁸⁷ before instituting His eternal kingdom.⁸⁸

A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Relationships

1. We affirm that the Triune God serves as the perfect and ultimate model for human relationships.⁸⁹ As a result, each person has equal value yet different roles, which are expressed in loving unity.⁹⁰
2. We affirm that differences in gifts and ministries are a manifestation of the multifaceted grace of God.⁹¹ As a result, we encourage all believers to use their gifts in ways that promote the unity, growth and ministry of the local church.⁹²
3. We affirm our obligation to love and respect one another, and to practice the 'one another' exhortations. As a result, we commit to work together and to resolve our differences, for the good of individuals, churches and communities.⁹³
4. We affirm the responsibility of local churches to govern their own affairs⁹⁴ while urging those churches to live and serve in community and interdependency with other churches.⁹⁵
5. We affirm that the mandate and urgency to fulfill the Great Commission leads us to seek ways to cooperate with one another, and with likeminded Christians on the local, regional and global levels.⁹⁶

A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Mission

1. We affirm that God's plan for this age is best summarized in Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations.⁹⁷ This includes the evangelistic call to reconciliation

with God by means of the completed work of Christ and the lifelong pursuit of obedience to God by means of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit.⁹⁸

2. We affirm that God's plan for this age includes the recognition, training and releasing of spiritually qualified and appropriately trained leaders.⁹⁹ While the specific gifts, abilities and responsibilities of leaders may vary, all leaders must serve as servants of God,¹⁰⁰ shepherds of God's people¹⁰¹ and stewards of God's resources.¹⁰²
3. We affirm that God's plan for this age is most fully expressed through establishing healthy churches. Although practices may vary between cultures, healthy local churches are comprised of believers in Christ who assume a mutual commitment to worship, learning, service, prayer and witness.¹⁰³
4. We affirm that God's plan for this age includes our responsibility to express the compassion of Christ through proclaiming the Gospel in words while loving in deeds.¹⁰⁴ We are committed to finding creative and practical ways to address the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of a fallen humanity.¹⁰⁵

The "Statement of Faith" herein set forth cannot be changed or diminished.

Resolutions Adopted at the Business Session of the Charis Fellowship, July 25, 2019

Human Life—Its Dignity and Duties

Whereas God is the creator of the heavens and the earth and all it contains (Genesis 1:1; Psalm 24:1); and

Whereas God created humanity as his highest creation, making humanity alone in his image and after his likeness (Genesis 1:26; Psalm 8); and

Whereas God created man as male and female, both as bearers of his image (Genesis 1:27); and

Whereas the woman was made from the man, she alone being equal to him yet different from him, to complete the duality of human existence and make marital union possible (Genesis 2:18-23); and

Whereas God appointed mankind as stewards over creation (Genesis 1:26, 28; Psalm 8:6-8); and

Whereas God chose Israel, the object of his love and protection, to be his special people and a blessing to the whole world (Genesis 12:1-3; 17:7-8; Amos 3:1-2; Zechariah 2:7; Romans 9:4-5; 11:28-29); and

Whereas human sinfulness deeply afflicts our relationship to God and to one another (including how men and women, parents and children, rich and poor, strong and weak, and people of differing races relate to each other) and also afflicts our understanding of ourselves (who we are as human beings), tempting us to define ourselves in subjective humanistic ways rather than according to our creator's design (Genesis 3:16; 6:5; 8:21; Romans 1:18-32; 3:10-18);

We therefore affirm several ethical implications of these biblical truths:

1. All human life (including the unborn, those with mental and physical infirmities and those who are terminally ill) is precious and worthy of our protection and care.
2. The loss of any human life by the actions of another is tragic. Nonetheless, taking human life is justifiable in narrow circumstances such as self-defense or defense of others (whether exercised by an individual or by the magistrate). Yet even this is tragic, for God himself takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).
3. Abortion as practiced in the United States and many other countries is abhorrent to God and an assault on human dignity. Its practice is to be opposed legally and morally and ministries of care for the mother and child must be developed and offered. Of special concern is new legislation that allows abortion up to the moment of birth. Adoption is always an honorable alternative to abortion. Men and women must avoid sexual sin and both must take responsibility for its consequences.

4. Assisted suicide is an illegitimate response to human suffering toward the end of life. Instead, ministries of care, support and pain management are to be offered to the dying. Assisted suicide for those suffering a terminal illness will easily be rationalized to justify suicide for other reasons and to justify taking human life without consent.
5. The Word of God justifies capital punishment as a proper judgment against those who commit premeditated murder. Rather than being a violation of our creation in the image of God, capital punishment is actually based on this truth (Genesis 9:6). However, the actual practice of capital punishment must be by legitimate authorities and must rest on equity and sufficient evidence and always be seriously judged by biblical standards.
6. To serve human needs we must declare and practice “the true fast” of Isaiah 58—do not exploit workers, do not engage in quarreling and malicious talk, loose the chains of injustice, set the oppressed free, feed the hungry, shelter the poor, clothe the naked, service the needy, defend the defenseless.
7. We call for opposition to all forms of human trafficking, especially sexual exploitation, and abuse against immigrants. Families should be kept intact as much as possible.
8. Support and justice must be extended toward all who are abused or sexually assaulted, especially in situations of subjugation or fear. Protections and an atmosphere supporting honest disclosures are vital. Sexual assault under the guise of religious or secular positions is especially offensive to God and should be to us.
9. Christians must never forget the historical sufferings of the Jewish people and must express alarm at increases in anti-Semitism in our own day and nation. We must be bold in expressing our love for the Jewish people and our repentance for wrongs in the past. We must stand up and be counted and call for actions against anti-Semitism.
10. Marriage is foremost an establishment by God, not an institution of man. Marriage is a union between a man and a woman, sealed in the covenant sign of sexual union. Sexual relationships are appropriate within marriage only. Marriage is God’s plan for birthing and raising children in a loving, supportive home. God intends that marriage be a life-long covenant not “put asunder” by man.
11. People may choose to live honorably before God in singleness, as exemplified by many biblical personalities including Jesus and the Apostle Paul. This choice may lead to greater undistracted service to God. It may also open avenues of temptation that must be resisted.
12. “Gender identity” needs to be understood by fair analysis of data and by listening to those who do not identify themselves by conventional male/female categories. However, our ultimate directives come not from social constructions but from biblical understandings. God created human beings as either male or female. Departures from this understanding, whether due to dysfunction or choice, are not the plan of God. Our society must be careful not to coerce people and institutions (including churches) that do not support current expansion of gender identity rights. Boys and girls (and their parents) have a right to privacy and safety and to fair instruction on this subject that is not agenda driven.
13. Human governments are established by God for promotion of justice and punishment of evil and for the peace and safety of their citizens. Governments exist to further the well being of all, not to accumulate power and wealth into the hands of the rulers and the privileged at the expense of subjects. Governments should enhance human flourishing and liberty, not repress these in any way. Governments must protect freedom of religion. Christians should pray for all who are in authority and be open to participate in government through voting, influence and service as much as is ethically possible.
14. America’s prisons are often places of bureaucracy and neglect that assault the human dignity of prisoners while failing to truly reform them. Prison reform must include fitting punishment that makes victims whole, plus training that enable willing prisoners to return to society and live constructive lives. Those who have paid their debt to society should have a process to accrue citizen rights once again, including the right to vote.
15. Civility in speech and good conduct toward others who are in God’s likeness are our duties. Our communications with one another must be consistent with loving our neighbor as ourselves. Civility must begin at the highest levels of government—the president and the Congress in America—and continue to all other levels. Civility must avoid the ad hominem attacks on opponents that have become so much a part of today’s charged political climate. Civil communication must characterize all “social media” and Christians especially must not communicate with gossipy, malicious, or oppressive words in their use of social media.

16. Humanity must understand “dominion over creation” not as ownership but as stewardship. We must also recognize God is infinite and creation is finite. To consume creation’s resources as if they are infinite is a form of idolatry. We are free to use and enjoy creation, not to misuse it or deny future generations its enjoyment. In our quest to be good stewards of creation, we must always and only worship God the Creator and never deify or worship creation in any way.
17. Since God created the entire human race, his “Common Grace” flows to all people. Common Grace is seen in the benevolence of creation, a basic sense of right and wrong given to all, institutions such as family and good government, wholesome human achievements and enjoyments, and in other positive features of human existence. Christians are able to work with non-believers to expand the benefits of common grace.

Governmental Responsibility

Governments must operate with a strong sense of integrity and faithfulness to the laws of the nation. They must honor their commitments to their citizens by fulfilling their basic duties, controlling entitlements and spending, and avoiding immense deficits that will burden future generations.

We warn our government against yielding to the passion for an ever-broader expansion of rights that are popular at the moment but are not wise or good for the long-range health of the nation.

Religious Freedom

We strongly support religious liberty in America and around the world as we look with alarm at the deterioration of this freedom, especially as it is repressed in countries like China but even incrementally in the United States. We support:

- Genuine freedom of religion for all, not to be reduced to “freedom of worship.”
- The free *exercise* of religion, not to be reduced to the right to believe as you choose.
- Freedom of religion for all religious organizations, not merely “houses of worship.” This includes the right to employ people who adhere to the doctrines and morals of the church or religious organization.
- Freedom for people to live out their religious convictions in public and in their workplaces and not be harassed and penalized by adverse governmental action.

Immigration Reform

America has been a land of immigrants since before the nation was founded. Between the extremes of nativism and open borders, most citizens have open arms toward immigrants but also see the rule of law and secure borders as essential for a safe and civil society. Today our nation and our churches are increasingly populated by people from a multitude of cultures and lands, and many of these people are undocumented.

How can our Charis Fellowship respond?

1. We call on our churches to give prayer, thought, discussion, and action toward addressing the problem of the undocumented immigrant in a God-honoring way.
2. We recognize the divisive and controversial nature of this debate, and we encourage dialogue in the churches that is respectful, open-minded, and solution focused.
3. We further call on our churches to be the “reconciling presence of Christ” in the midst of a broken system that creates rancor, resentment, racism, selfishness, fear, exploitation, danger, and disregard for the law.
4. We call on our society and elected leaders to rise above political posturing and rancor to work toward a solution on immigration that is compassionate and realistic—a solution that accomplishes the government’s responsibility to protect its citizens and guests, while at the same time provides relief to the oppressed.
5. We recognize that meaningful solutions to this problem are not easily reached and must come through a determined will to achieve them. We deplore the present situation when our Federal Government is unable to resolve key immigration issues year after year.

6. We also recognize that the United States cannot accommodate everyone who desires to come to this country. Correcting the situations that force many to flee their home countries is one way to reduce the number attempting to gain entry into the United States.
7. We also call on the Federal Government to be wise in its use of Foreign Aid to aid in reforming situations in those foreign countries.

ARTICLE IV — CHARTER

Section 1. Authority.

1. The primary authority by which this church exists as an ecclesiastical body is received from God through the Holy Scriptures. It recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation which is common among the Charis Fellowship.
2. The secondary authority is by the laws of the State of Alaska under which it is incorporated.

Section 2. Property.

1. The title of the property of this church shall be vested in the corporate body of the church, except when the church is under contract with the Grace Brethren North American Missions, Inc.
2. All property or assets owned by the local church and its auxiliaries shall be irrevocably dedicated to religious purposes and upon dissolution such property or assets shall not inure to the benefit of any private citizen but shall revert to Grace Brethren North American Missions, Inc., so long as it is then in existence and is a qualified tax exempt organization under the then applicable Internal Revenue Code. In the event said Grace Brethren North American Missions, Inc. shall not then be in existence or shall not then be a qualifying tax exempt organization, said property shall be distributed to a religious organization which is a qualified tax exempt organization and which shall be selected by the members of the local church or, in the event of their failure to make such a selection, by the Judge of Court of general jurisdiction in the County where said church shall be located.

ARTICLE V — MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Qualifications

Any person who shall have confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is committed to Him as Savior and Lord, and who shall have submitted to the authority of the Bible as the complete, final, inerrant and inspired revelation of the Triune God to man, and who shall have testified to personal faith through baptism in the Name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and who shall have participated in membership orientation and consented to the covenants and provisions of these by-laws, may formally become a member of this church.

Section 2. Duties.

Members are expected to be faithful in all spiritual duties essential to the Christian life, to participate in communion ordinances, to be loyal to the church, to attend regularly its services, to contribute to its support and charities, and to share in its organized work.

Section 3. Privileges.

1. Only those members in good standing, fifteen years of age and older, are eligible to vote in all business sessions.
2. Any member who feels dissatisfaction with the general procedure of any department of this church shall make known his case to the Pastor or the Board of Elder-Overseers in writing. No verbal complaints shall be entertained before the Board of Elder-Overseers.

Section 4. Withdrawal.

A member's name may be dropped from the roll upon written request of the member involved, followed by communication from the elders.

Section 5. Dismissal.

1. Should a member fail to perform their duties as outlined in Section 2, Article V, and due efforts by the proper officials of the church have failed to encourage their interest, and after this condition has prevailed for one (1) year, their name may be dropped from the membership by action of the Board of Elders.
2. If any member of this church be opposed to any of the Biblical doctrines as accepted and practiced by this church, or if any member is found guilty of unscriptural conduct or the constant and deliberate disrupting of the peace and unity of the church, he or she may be dismissed from membership, following the discipline process of Matthew 18. All such cases shall first be investigated by the Board of Elders, who shall then make recommendation to the congregation of the church.
3. A two-thirds vote, by written ballot, of all members present at any regularly authorized business meeting shall be necessary for dismissal due to the above mentioned reasons under paragraph 2.
4. All members, by applying for membership, agree to submit themselves to the discipline of the Church as set forth in this section.

ARTICLE VI — GOVERNMENT

Section 1. Congregational Meetings.

1. An annual congregational meeting shall be held on a date set by the Board of Elder-Overseers when the annual reports shall be presented and such other business transacted as may properly come before the meeting
2. Additional congregational meetings may be called by the Board of Elders-Overseers.
3. All congregational meetings and their proposed agendas shall be publicly announced in at least two regularly scheduled services.
4. Those qualified members present at any duly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum required for the transaction of business.
5. All congregational decisions require a two-thirds (2/3) vote by members.

Section 2. Officers and Committees.

The officers and committees of this church shall be as follows:

1. Pastoral Staff

- a. Call. The call shall be for an indefinite period. When a vacancy occurs, one candidate at a time shall be recommended to the church by the Board of Elders-Overseers.
- b. Pastoral Duties. As an equal member of the Board of Elder-Overseers, he shall consider his primary responsibility that of equipping the saints in accord with Ephesians 4:11-16.
- c. Lead Pastor Duties. In addition to his pastoral duties, he shall be directly responsible for the selection, conduct and dismissal of the staff in consultation with the Board of Elder-Overseers.
- d. Termination. His leadership can be terminated voluntarily by the submission of a written resignation to the Board of Elders-Overseers and to the congregation at any regular service or business session. Immorality, insubordination or teaching contrary to Article III, the "Statement of Faith," shall be cause for immediate termination by the Board of Elders-Overseers.

2. Elders-Overseers.

- a. Call. The congregation shall elect from its members its own elders-overseers according to the qualifications set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Any member sensing God's call to this office may present himself to the Board of Elders-Overseers and upon their recommendation shall be submitted to the church for congregational election. If recognition of this elder-overseer is to be extended beyond the immediate congregation, the normal procedure for licensure and ordination examination in the district shall prevail.

- b. Duties. These elders-overseers shall be responsible for the oversight of all matters of church life and practice, shepherding through ministry of the Word and prayer (Acts 6.1-7), and shall see that opportunity be given for the Christian ordinances. The Board of Elders-Overseers shall serve as corporate officers of the church.
- c. Terms. The Board of Elders-Overseers will submit to the congregation for election each year a sufficient number of names to provide a full complement to their Board. The number of the Board of Elders-Overseers will be commensurate to the size and growth of the church, but ideally at no time will be less than three members. It is the goal of a new church to accomplish this as soon as possible. Initially the election of the Board of Elders-Overseers shall be divided into one thirds: one third for a three-year term; one-third for a two-year term; and one-third for a one-year term. After the initial election, all terms shall be for three years; however, an elder may serve two consecutive three-year terms before a mandatory one-year break. The second term shall be submitted for approval in the same manner as the first. Elders not currently serving on the Board are non-voting nor required to attend Board meetings, but are required to continue to fulfill the call and duties of an elder-overseer. Pastoral staff continually serves on this Board.
- d. Confirmation. A confirmation of the oversight of this Board shall be attested by:
 - i. Congregational approval on pastoral staff, elders-overseers, deacons, and deaconesses.
 - ii. Congregational approval of the annual church budget.
 - iii. Congregational approval on any and all amendments to these by-laws.
 - iv. The Board may at any time request the voice of the congregation on matters of particular significance.
- e. Termination. An elder-overseer may terminate his office by a written resignation to the Board. Disqualifying immorality, insubordination or teaching contrary to Article III, the "Statement of Faith," shall be cause for immediate termination by this Board.

3. Deacons and Deaconesses.

- a. Call. Deacons and Deaconesses shall be chosen from the members of the church according to the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Recommendations for this office shall be submitted to the Board of Elders-Overseers who will then present to the church those names approved for congregational election. The number of Deacons and Deaconesses shall be determined by the immediate needs of the congregation.
- b. Duties. Their ministries shall be to assist the Board of Elders-Overseers. They lead by coordinating the physical, practical and benevolent ministries to the congregation.
- c. Terms. The term of service shall be for a period of one year.
- d. Termination. A Deacon or Deaconess may terminate his or her office by a written resignation to the Board of Elders-Overseers. Disqualifying immorality, insubordination or teaching contrary to Article III, the "Statement of Faith," shall be cause for immediate termination by the Board of Elder-Overseers.

4. Ministry Teams

- a. Purpose. Ministry teams exist to carry out the vision and mission of Peninsula Grace Church.
- b. Accountability. Ministry teams function under the oversight of the Board of Elders-Overseers.
- c. Duration. Ministry teams may be established or discontinued as the needs of the church change from time to time.