

Executive Summary

Grand Avenue Baptist Church Constitution & Bylaws

The Constitution and Bylaws of Grand Avenue Baptist Church provide the biblical and organizational framework through which the church carries out its mission of glorifying God by making disciples of Jesus Christ. These governing documents define the church's doctrinal convictions, establish its leadership structure, clarify the responsibilities of membership, and provide an orderly process for conducting the ministry and business of the church in a manner that honors Christ.

Grand Avenue Baptist Church is a Bible-based, missions-driven, pastor-led, deaconserved church. This statement captures the philosophy of ministry reflected throughout these governing documents. Every section is designed to support the authority of God's Word, the fulfillment of the Great Commission, biblical leadership, faithful servant ministry, wise stewardship, and congregational participation under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

The Constitution affirms Grand Avenue Baptist Church as an autonomous Southern Baptist congregation organized for religious purposes under applicable nonprofit law. It recognizes the Bible as the authoritative, infallible, inerrant, and sufficient Word of God and adopts the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (as amended) as its statement of faith. It further affirms believer's baptism by immersion, the Lord's Supper as an ordinance of the church, and cooperation with Southern Baptist partners in advancing the gospel locally, nationally, and around the world.

Membership is understood as a covenant relationship among believers who have professed faith in Jesus Christ, been baptized by immersion, completed the church's membership process, and affirmed the Membership Covenant. Members are encouraged to pursue spiritual maturity through worship, prayer, Bible study, generosity, evangelism, discipleship, service, and faithful participation in the life and mission of the church. Biblical procedures are also established for member care, restoration, and, when necessary, loving church discipline with the goal of repentance, reconciliation, and restoration.

The congregation elects the Senior Pastor, approves the annual budget, authorizes major financial commitments, affirms key leadership positions, amends the governing documents, and votes on other significant matters affecting the direction of the church. Church conferences provide an orderly and transparent process through which these responsibilities are exercised.

The leadership structure is designed to promote biblical accountability, collaboration, and effective ministry. The Senior Pastor serves as the church's spiritual leader, faithfully preaching God's Word, leading in prayer, shepherding the congregation, casting vision, equipping believers for ministry, and overseeing the ministry staff.

The church is served by several standing leadership teams, each with clearly defined responsibilities that strengthen the ministry of the church. The **Trustee Team** serves as steward of the church's property, legal documents, and governing records. The **Finance Team** develops the annual budget, promotes biblical stewardship, and provides financial oversight. The **Pastor Wellness and Personnel Team** encourages and supports the Senior Pastor while giving counsel on personnel-related matters. The **Deacon Ministry Team** ministers to the congregation through member care, ordinances, conflict resolution, pastoral support, and servant leadership. The **Nominating Team** identifies and recommends qualified members to serve in leadership positions throughout the church.

Together with the Senior Pastor, the chairmen of the Trustee Team, Finance Team, Pastor Wellness and Personnel Team, and Deacon Ministry Team comprise the **Pastor's Council**. The Pastor's Council provides strategic counsel, accountability, coordination, and unity among the church's principal ministry areas while helping ensure that the mission and vision of the church remain central to every area of ministry.

Grand Avenue Baptist Church is committed to faithful financial stewardship through annual budgeting, regular financial reporting, independent financial examinations, and clear processes for congregational approval of significant financial decisions. These practices promote integrity, accountability, transparency, and wise stewardship of the resources entrusted to the church.

Ultimately, the Constitution and Bylaws exist to provide a clear biblical foundation for leadership, membership, stewardship, and ministry. They are intended to protect the unity of the church, encourage faithful leadership, preserve congregational governance, and equip Grand Avenue Baptist Church to remain faithful to God's Word while reaching Fort Smith, Arkansas, America, and the nations with the gospel of Jesus Christ for generations to come.