



# AnchorageGraceChurch

Transcendent Worship  
Expository Preaching  
Building Community  
Making Disciples

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## Constitution

June 5, 2016

CONSTITUTION OF THE  
ANCHORAGE GRACE CHURCH  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

ARTICLE I  
Name

The name of this church will be THE ANCHORAGE GRACE CHURCH, INC., hereinafter referred to as “the Church.”

ARTICLE II  
Purpose

The purpose of this assembly of believers will be:

1. To glorify God—Romans 15:5 – 9; Ephesians 3:21; II Thessalonians 1:12;
2. To edify itself—Ephesians 4:11 – 16;
3. To teach and train its members—Matthew 28:20; II Timothy 2:2, 3:14 – 17;
4. To evangelize its community and the world—Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8, 5:42, 8:4, 13:1 – 4.

ARTICLE III  
Covenant

The covenant of the membership of this assembly of believers is as follows:

1. We acknowledge Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.
2. We accept the Holy Bible, both Old and New Testaments, as verbally inspired and make it our only rule of faith and practice.
3. We recognize the privilege and duty of regularly uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship.
4. We participate in the Christian ordinances of baptism and communion.
5. We publicly worship God.
6. We advance His Church on earth.

We solemnly covenant and agree with each other in the sight of God to associate ourselves as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ warranted by the Word of God.

We agree to obey the instructions of the Gospel, to submit ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of the Church, and to walk together in brotherly love.

We maintain the basic content of our preaching and teaching to be the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible.

We do these with the aid of our Heavenly Father, Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation; of Jesus Christ, Who redeemed us with His blood; and of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide.

ARTICLE IV  
Charter

The Church is represented and led by a Board of Elders and Pastoral Staff (with roles as described herein), with authority vested to the voting membership, Board, and Staff as specified throughout this constitution. The Church is subject to no other ecclesiastical body.

The Church recognizes the Holy Scriptures as its sole authority in all matters of faith and practice.

The Church is incorporated and chartered under the Laws of the State of Alaska.

This Church exists exclusively for charitable, religious, and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Revenue Law) as a corporation not for profit.

The Church shall accomplish and operate its organizational goals and services by the principles of this Constitution and by the official public policies of the Church as determined by the officers of the organization.

The Church shall have power to buy, own, and sell real property in its own name. All property of the Church is irrevocably dedicated to charitable, religious, and educational purposes that align with the Statement of Faith in this Constitution. If a division occurs in the Church, the name and all property shall be retained by those adhering to this constitution. If the Church ceases to function and its organization is liquidated, dissolved, or abandoned, then all properties will accrue to Grace Christian School of Anchorage, Alaska. All properties which are unclaimed by Grace Christian School will accrue to the benefit of another evangelical fund, foundation, or corporation which is organized and operated for those purposes and in alignment with the Statement of Faith found in this Constitution, not to that of any private person.

ARTICLE V  
Membership

1. Qualifications

The membership of the Church will consist of such persons who confess Jesus Christ to be the Son of God; who have received Him to be their Savior and Lord; who have been baptized by immersion in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and who have the answer of a good conscience toward God and the community of believers. Upon satisfactory completion of an application for membership and approval by the Board of Elders, such persons will be accepted as members. Their names will be added to the membership roll and published in the regular bulletin.

2. Duties

Members are encouraged to be faithful in all duties of the Christian life; to regularly attend the services of the Church; and to give gladly of their time, treasure, and talent as God prospers them for the support and share of His work through the Church.

### 3. Rights and Privileges

- A. Members in good standing may participate in any business meeting or ministry of the Church and members at least 18 years of age may vote.
- B. Church membership shall be required for all officers, teachers, and ministry leaders with the Church. This membership will not be required for teachers and staff of Grace Christian School.
- C. All Church members shall retain (and be encouraged to participate in) the freedom to raise concerns, issues, and questions to the Board of Elders for discussion and determination.

### 4. Discipline of Members

- A. All members of this fellowship are expected to conduct their lives according to the standard set forth in the Scriptures. Such conduct includes moral purity (1 Corinthians 6:18 – 20; 1 Thessalonians 4:1 – 7), personal holiness (Ephesians 4:25), and biblical fidelity (Jude 20–21; 2 Timothy 3:14 – 17). Our lives are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity as we walk in the light (1 John 1:6 – 7), emulating the character of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22 – 23; Ephesians 5:15 – 21; 2 Peter 1:5 – 8).
- B. Should any member willfully depart from this scriptural standard and engage in conduct which conflicts with biblical principles of holiness, the procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15 – 16 and expanded in the public policies of the Church shall be followed for the purpose of leading the erring individual to repentance and ultimately to full restoration.
- C. When a member of the Church becomes aware of an offense of such magnitude that it hinders spiritual growth and the testimony of the Church, he is to go alone to the offending party and seek to restore his brother, after first examining himself. If reconciliation is not reached, a second member, whether it be an Elder, Deacon, Deaconess, Pastor, or other mature Christian, is to accompany the one seeking restoration. This shall be done in a spirit of humility and gentleness (Galatians 6:1), as well as loving honesty (Ephesians 4:25).
- D. If after these steps of reproof are taken and there is no repentance, two of the Elders shall confront, counsel, and pray with the person. Should there still be no evidence of repentance, the person shall be removed from the membership and fellowship of this Church upon the recommendation of the Elder Board and a congregational ratification by a 2/3 vote of the members present at a business meeting (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:14 – 15).

### 5. Termination from Membership

- A. Church letters may be granted to members in good standing for the purpose of moving to another church assembly upon written request. Such letters will be signed by one of the Elders. Announcement of letters issued will be published in the regular Church bulletin.

- B. A member may be removed from the membership by his own request. However, when a member is under church discipline, it is the church's intention to follow the scriptural standards for discipline as herein stated and as stated in the official Manual of Policy, Management, and Operations of the church.
- C. At the direction of the Board of Elders, the membership roll will be updated annually. Any member who has a lack of participation/attendance in the ministry of the Church for a period of one year and does not respond to written inquiry concerning such attendance shall have his membership terminated by the Elder Board.
- D. The name of any member taken off the membership roll for whatever reason will be published in the regular bulletin.

ARTICLE VI  
Church Officers

- 1. The congregation shall elect officers to perform duties for specific terms for the Corporation. The officers of the Church shall be the Board of Elders. For the purposes of all legal, organizational, and ethical issues, the Board of Elders will choose its offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer.

2. Elders

- A. Qualifications—No man will be considered who does not meet the standard set forth in I Tim. 3:1 – 7, Titus 1:5 – 9, and I Peter 5:1 – 4. The terms “Elder,” “Bishop,” and “Pastor-Teacher” are recognized as referring to the same individual. Elders must be members of the Church.
- B. Call—After much prayer and waiting upon God, the membership will annually recommend men they consider qualified to serve on the Board of Elders. After further prayer and waiting upon the Lord, the Board of Elders will present one or more candidate to the congregation for ratification to serve a term or partial term on the Board of Elders. Ratification of the candidate(s) will be by a 2/3 vote of the members present at the meeting.
- C. Responsibilities—The Elders will be directly responsible to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church, and are instructed by Him to have oversight and manage all matters of Church life and practice. The Elders are responsible to seek the wisdom of God through prayer and the wisdom of Spirit-filled members of the Church before making decisions affecting the whole assembly. Effort should be made through careful explanation and prayer to have the whole assembly in agreement as decisions are made. They will give direction to the Deacons and Deaconesses of the Church as to the areas of their service and ministry. Their basic responsibilities can be summarized by the following:

1. Spiritual Responsibilities

- a. To lead the congregation by example—I Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; I Timothy 4:12.
- b. To feed and protect the believers—Acts 20:28 – 31; I Peter 5:2.

- c. To teach believers the Word of God—Acts 2:42; Ephesians 4:11; I Timothy 4:11 – 16; II Timothy 4:1 – 4.
- d. To manage the affairs of Church life—I Timothy 3:4 – 5, 5:17; I Peter 5:2 – 3.
- e. To equip believers for their work of ministering one to another that the body might be edified—Ephesians 4:11 – 16; I Peter 4:10 – 11.

## 2. Governmental Responsibilities

- a. The corporate officers of the Church will be Elders. The offices of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Board of Elders will be elected by the Board.
- b. The Board of Elders will maintain an openness and eagerness to receive the opinions and suggestions of all members of the congregation.
- c. The Board of Elders will incur no financial indebtedness unless ratified by 2/3 vote of the members present at the meeting. Only the congregation has the authority to incur debt.

D. Term of Service—An Elder will serve until he voluntarily resigns **or** is removed in accordance with the provisions of this section. Each new and each serving Elder must be confirmed by 2/3 of the votes cast at the annual business meeting. In extraordinary circumstances, when it is necessary to remove an Elder between annual meetings, the Elder may be removed by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Elders **or** by 2/3 of the votes cast at a schedule business meeting. An Elder who has been removed, or voluntarily resigns, may only be reinstated through the normal Elder selection process.

No accusation shall be brought against an Elder except on the testimony of at least two members in good standing (I Timothy 5:19 – 21). The matter shall then be taken to the Board of Elders for investigation and resolution. If the matter remains unresolved, the Elders shall call a normal or special business meeting and present the matter to the congregation for a final decision.

E. Relationship of Elders to One Another—No Elder will be superior to another. The Head of the Church is Jesus Christ and the Elders will carry out their specific responsibilities and use their spiritual gifts in a spirit of unity, looking to Jesus Christ for direction. The Board of Elders will annually evaluate the members of the Board as to character and ministry; this evaluation will be for the purpose of mutual accountability and encouragement.

### 3. Church Staff

#### A. Senior Pastor

1. In order to fulfill its stated purpose, the congregation shall call a Senior Pastor. He will prepare the people for works of service in keeping with our vision of Ephesians 4:11 – 12. His specific responsibilities shall be:
  - a. To pray for the Church needs, sick, weak, needy, etc.
  - b. To serve as a godly leadership example to all people in all areas of life by example (I Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24; I Timothy 4:12; 6:13 – 14).
  - c. To teach, feed, and protect the believers with the truth and Word of God (Acts 2:42; 4:11; 20:28 – 31; 2 Timothy 2:15; 4:1 – 4; I Peter 5:2).
  - d. To disciple, counsel, and equip believers for their Christian walk and work of ministering one to another so that the body of Christ might be edified (Ephesians 4:11 – 16; I Thessalonians 5:14; I Peter 4:10 – 11).
  - e. To be involved in the work of an evangelist as one performs his normal duties in the pulpit, in counseling, and in normal life (2 Timothy 4:5).
  - f. To promote godliness and unity among the body (Ephesians 4:1 – 3; I Timothy 4:7).
  - g. To provide oversight and manage the affairs of the Church's life, along with the Board of Elders and ministry leaders.
2. The Senior Pastor shall be a man of true Christian experience and established character. He shall qualify for his office according to the standards of I Timothy 3:2 – 7.
3. Candidates for the senior pastoral position will be sought by a selection committee formed from the membership of the church. This selection committee will be formed by the Board of Elders. Consideration of and final selection of individuals for the pastoral position will be done by the Board of Elders, which will then present a candidate to the congregation for consideration for hiring. The members present at the meeting will ratify the hiring of a candidate by a 2/3 vote. The Senior Pastor shall be called for an indefinite period of time.
4. The pastor shall become a member of the Church and be in full accord with its statement of faith. By virtue of his office, he shall serve as a member of the Board of Elders.
5. If the Senior Pastor desires to resign, two months notice shall be given to the Board of Elders in writing, unless waived by mutual consent. If for some reason the congregation desires his termination, he shall be removed by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Elders and a 2/3 vote of the church members cast by members present at a regular or special business meeting. Accusation against the Senior Pastor will be handled in the same way as any against an Elder, as written herein. Compensation for termination will be determined by the Board of Elders at that time.

6. The Pastor's normal compensation will be set by recommendation of the Board of Elders and ratified by Church members cast at a business meeting by a 2/3 vote. All compensation will be reviewed annually.
7. The Senior Pastor will annually be evaluated by the Board of Elders, just as all other pastoral members and members of the Board of Elders will be evaluated as written herein.

#### B. Associate Pastoral Staff

1. The Board of Elders and Church may employ various associate pastors as well as full-time and part-time ministers. They shall comprise the pastoral staff and shall be responsible to the Senior Pastor and Board of Elders.
2. Pastoral staff members shall qualify for their office according to the standards of I Timothy 3:2 – 7. They shall be in full accord with the statement of faith and Church philosophy of ministry and shall become members as soon after joining the staff as practicable.
3. The selection, job description, terms of employment, and compensation of their ministry shall be determined by the Senior Pastor, with approval by the Board of Elders. Employment and compensation shall then be subject to ratification by the general congregation (cast by a 2/3 vote of the congregation at a business meeting).
4. The selection and termination of the School Administrator, who serves as an Associate Pastor of the Church as well, will be implemented by the joint agreement of the Board of Elders and the School Board, as stated in the By-Laws of Grace Christian School, a ministry of Anchorage Grace Church.
5. The procedure for handling accusations against any of the pastoral staff shall be identical with that applying to the Elders.
6. All pastoral staff members shall be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Senior Pastor.
7. All pastoral staff members shall be welcome to attend all Board of Elders meetings, but shall serve as non-voting participants on the Board.

#### C. General Staff

In order to accomplish the work of the Church, other workers may be employed as necessary. Procedures related to their selection, employment, and termination shall be the responsibility of the Senior Pastor and Board of Elders. All general church staff members shall be reviewed and evaluated annually by the Senior Pastor or his designee.



#### D. Position Descriptions

1. A description of duties and responsibilities shall be prepared for each pastoral and general church staff position.
2. Such descriptions shall be approved by the Elder Board before being published.

#### E. Elected Office

No member of the pastoral or church staff shall seek or hold an elected political office, except that an elected officer who joins the staff during his term of office may, with the approval of the Elder Board, remain in office until the next annual church business meeting.

#### 4. Deacons and Deaconesses

- A. Qualifications—Qualifications of Deacons and Deaconesses will be based upon the standards of Acts 6:2 – 3; I Timothy 3:8 – 12; Romans 16:1 – 2. Deacons and Deaconesses must be members of the Church.
- B. Call—After much prayer and waiting upon God, the membership will annually recommend men and women they consider qualified to serve as Deacons and Deaconesses. After further prayer and waiting upon the Lord, the Board of Elders will present one or more candidates to the voting membership for ratification to serve a term or partial term. Ratification of the candidate(s) will be by a 2/3 vote of the members present at the meeting.

#### C. Responsibilities

1. Deacons and Deaconesses will meet on a regular basis to consider matters of church life presented to them by the Elder Board.
2. The Deacons and Deaconesses will assist the Elder Board in the ministry of the Church, in aiding the general spiritual care and needs of the congregation, in assisting the Senior Pastor at the communion and baptismal services, and perform other duties as assigned by the Board of Elders.
3. Each Deacon and Deaconess is expected to inspire and challenge the members of the Church by his/her dedicated leadership and service. He, or she, shall be known as a consistent witness and testimony for our Lord Jesus Christ, following the examples of Stephen in Acts 7 and Philip in Acts 8.

D. Term of Service—Deacons and Deaconesses will serve three year terms. Termination of Deacons and Deaconesses will be by 2/3 vote of the Board of Elders and also by 2/3 of the members present at a business meeting.

E. Number—The number of Deacons and Deaconesses will be determined by the needs of the congregation.

ARTICLE VII  
Licensing and Ordination

1. Licensing

The license, as recognized by the State of Alaska, is issued by the Board of Elders and is given in recognition of a man's call to the ministry at Anchorage Grace Church. Its aim is to allow a man to perform all of the ecclesiastical duties and functions of the Church and indicates that he meets the qualifications of being a "clergyman" in the eyes of the State.

2. Ordination

- A. Ordination refers to the mutual recognition by the Board of Elders of a man's call to the ministry, preparation as a pastor, and qualification to serve. Ordination shall be conferred for life, so long as the man continues to manifest the qualifications of the office.
- B. Ordination will follow the public evaluation and examination of the candidate by the Board of Elders. It shall be based on one's knowledge of the Christian Scriptures and evangelical theology (as understood by the statement of faith in this constitution), church history, and application of practical theology and ministry.
- C. On the basis of a man's poor or improper behavior which departs from the scriptural standard, or his change in theology from the statement of faith herein, the Board of Elders may withdraw its ordination from that man by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Elders and a 2/3 vote of the church congregation cast at a called business meeting. Such termination shall be decided by the Elder Board after due consideration. The reason for the withdrawal shall be stated in an official letter to the terminated minister, sent by certified mail, with return receipt requested. The Board of Elders shall allow three months for the minister to return any questions or rebuttal. The Board shall then send an official notification to the Internal Revenue Service stating the withdrawal and general reason for termination.

ARTICLE VIII  
Standing Ministries and Committees

1. Definition

Standing ministries and committees may be set up or eliminated as the needs of the congregation change. Examples of standing ministries and committees are nursery care, social functions, music ministry, treasure duties, and Sunday Bible class organization. Standing ministries and committees are not offices in the Church.

2. Selection

Ministry leaders will be appointed by the Pastoral Staff and/or the Board of Elders for each standing ministry or committee for administrative and organizational purposes. The term of service will be one year, or another period accepted by mutual agreement. The Pastoral Staff and Board of Elders may receive recommendations from the congregation to fill each ministry.

3. Duties

These ministries will be guided by the Board of Elders.

ARTICLE IX  
Meetings of the Church

1. Church Services

- A. Regular Church services will be planned and performed for all members of the family.
- B. Communion services will be observed at least twice annually, or as otherwise designated by the Elders.
- C. Special meetings, Bible conferences, missionary conferences, and evangelistic meetings will be planned by the Pastoral Staff and Board of Elders as the needs of the membership indicate.
- D. All services, meetings, and events including marriage Ceremonies, Funerals, and Conferences will be conducted for the purposes of winning people to Christ, discipling believers in the Word of God, and otherwise edifying the Body of Christ on the basis of the Biblical doctrines found in the Statement of Faith.

2. Business Meetings

- A. At least one annual business meeting will be held each year, as well as quarterly business meetings, for the purpose of communication and strategizing.
- B. Special business meetings may be called by the Board of Elders. Public announcement will be made on two consecutive Sundays specifying the time and location.
- C. At any Church business meeting, the members present will constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. Only regular members who are eighteen years of age or older may vote. Voting rights are effective immediately upon acceptance into membership. Members may vote in absentia if they are unable to attend such business meetings. All absentia votes must be signed.
- D. A majority vote of the members present at any business meeting will prevail unless otherwise designated by this constitution. The manner in which the vote is taken will be at the option of the presiding officer with the following exception: The confirmation of Church officers and standing committees will be by ballot vote.
- E. In case of questions regarding parliamentary procedure, the Scott, Foresman Robert's Rules of Order will be used as a guideline, but will not be considered binding upon the Board of Elders or the membership. "Let all things be done decently and in order." I Corinthians 14:40
- F. The Chairman of the Board of Elders or other designee of the Board of Elders will moderate business meetings.

ARTICLE X  
Church Records

1. An accurate, complete, and permanent record shall be kept of the procedures and decisions of all regular and special business meetings of the Church, the Board of Elders, the Deacons and Deaconesses, and all other official committees reporting to the Church of Board of Elders.
2. Discussions by the Board of Elders of items of a personal nature which do not result in the recommendation to the Church membership will not be entered in the public minutes of the Elders' meetings. Such matters may be included as attachments to the minutes for all Board members only and may include, but not be limited to: Pastoral and staff counseling of individuals that affect the witness and testimony of the Church ministry, discussion of proposed disciplinary actions that do not result in recommendation to the membership, and other items of a personal nature, revelation of which would result in unnecessary embarrassment to the parties involved. This is for the express support, encouragement, and privacy of individual members.
3. A Manual of Policy, Management, and Operations shall be prepared and maintained current by the Board of Elders. This document is to define specific Church policies and positions not included in this Constitution. It shall be available for public inspection at all times.
4. The Secretary of the Board of Elders shall be responsible for the official Church records.

ARTICLE XI  
Receipt, Investment, and Disbursement of Funds

1. The Corporation shall receive all monies and/or other properties transferred to it for the purposes for which this Constitution was formed (as shown by the Articles of Incorporation and by the IRS 501 (c)(3) code). Nothing contained herein shall require the congregation or Board of Elders to accept or receive any money or property of any kind if it shall determine in its discretion that receipt of such money or property is contrary to the expressed purposes of the Corporation as shown by the Constitution.
2. The Corporation shall hold, manage, and disburse any fund or properties received by it from any source in a manner that is consistent with the expressed purposes of this Constitution. Designated gifts from private individuals shall not be accepted except for those which promote the mission of the Church as approved by the Board of Elders.
3. The Corporation shall maintain adequate and correct accounts, books, and records of its business and properties. All such books, records, and accounts shall be kept at its principal place of business in the State of Alaska, as fixed by the Board of Elders from time to time.
4. All checks, drafts, demands for money, and notes of the Corporation and all written contracts of the Corporation shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, as the Board of Elders may from time to time by resolution designate.

ARTICLE XII  
Amendments

This constitution may be amended by a 2/3 vote of the membership at a business meeting, provided public notice is given in the services of two consecutive Sundays, including announcement of the proposed amendment in the Church bulletin for two consecutive Sundays.

A Manual of Procedures of By-Laws may be developed and adopted by the membership to define those activities through which the concepts and principles of this Constitution will be implemented.

ARTICLE XIII  
Statement of Faith

We believe in:

1. THE BIBLE: The Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God (II Tim. 3:16; II Peter 1:21).
2. THE ONE TRUE GOD: Existing eternally as three persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:22; Matt. 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).
3. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: His preexistence and deity (John 1:1-3), incarnation by virgin birth (John 1:14; Matt. 1:18-23), sinless life (Heb. 4:15), substitutionary death (II Corinthians 5:21), bodily resurrection (Luke 24:36-43), ascension into heaven and present ministry (Heb. 4:14-16), and coming again (Acts 1:11).
4. THE HOLY SPIRIT: His personality (John 16:7-15) and deity (Acts 5:3-4); and His work in each believer: baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration (I Corinthians 12:13; Rom. 8:9), and filling (Eph. 5:18) to empower for Christian life and service (Eph. 3:16; Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-23).
5. MAN: His direct creation in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (Gen. 3:1-24; Rom. 5:12), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (John 3:3-5).
6. SALVATION: A complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone, received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; I Peter 1:18-19).
7. THE CHURCH: One true Church, the body and bride of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; 5:25-32), composed of all true believers of the present age (I Corinthians 12:12-13); and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for world-wide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in fellowship and work (Eph. 4:11-16).

8. CHRISTIAN LIFE: A life of righteousness, good works, and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (Rom. 12:1-2), manifested by speaking the truth (James 5:12), maintaining the sanctity of the home (Eph. 5:22-6:4), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (I Corinthians 6:1-8), not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (Rom. 12:17-21), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), and maintaining a life of prayer (Eph. 6:18; Phil. 4:6), including the privilege, when sick, of calling for the Elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (James 5:13-18). Additionally for CHRISTIAN LIFE: Reference 13. STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY and 14. STATEMENT ON THE MEANING OF MINISTER.
9. ORDINANCES: Christians should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are: (1) baptism of believers by immersion (Matt. 28:19) and (2) communion of the bread and the cup (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)
10. SATAN: His existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (Rev. 12:1-10), his judgment (John 12:31), and final doom (Rev. 20:10).
11. SECOND COMING: The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth (I Thess. 4:16-17) before the tribulation (I Thess. 1:10; Rev. 3:10), and afterward to descend with the Church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (Rev. 19:11-20:6).
12. FUTURE LIFE: The conscious existence of the dead (Phil. 1:21-23; Luke 16:19-31), the resurrection of the body (John 5:28-29), the judgment and reward of believers (Rom. 14:10-12; II Corinthians 5:10), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (Rev. 20:11-15), the eternal life of the saved (John 3:16), and the eternal punishment of the lost (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:15).
13. STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE AND SEXUALITY: God established marriage from the beginning of creation as an exclusive covenant relationship uniting together one *biological* man and one *biological* woman (Gen 2:24; Mal 2:14). This definition of marriage is reaffirmed throughout the Bible (Matt 19:5; Mark 10:7-8; Eph 5:31). As a divinely ordained institution, it derives its meaning from God alone and is thus not subject to redefinition by any other authority.

Marriage is a gift given by God as part of His common grace to mankind (Gen 2:18; 1 Pet 3:7). While it is subject to the curse of the Fall (Gen 3:16), it is nonetheless still capable of fulfilling God's purposes (Gen 9:1; Mal 2:15; 1 Cor 7:2). What's more, when modeled by two Christians, it is intended to illustrate the relationship between Christ and the Church and is thus a living and dynamic picture of the gospel (Eph 5:23-32).

Sexual intimacy is designed by God, and when expressed between a man and a woman (*as identified biologically*) who are united in marriage, is right and acceptable (Heb 13:4; 1 Tim 4:3; 1 Pet 3:7). However, *any* form of sexual immorality—be it adultery, fornication, homosexuality, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, pedophilia, pornography, attempting to change one's biological sex, or even disagreement with one's biological sex—is sinful, offensive to God, and incurs His judgment (Lev 18:1-30; Matt 5:28; Rom 1:26-29; 1 Cor 5:1-5, 11; 6:9; Gal 5:19-21; 1 Thess 4:1-8; Heb 13:4).

Nevertheless, no form of sexual sin renders a person incapable of receiving forgiveness. Rather, God promises that anyone who turns from their sin in repentance and places their trust in the atoning death and resurrection of Jesus Christ will receive forgiveness and redemption from sin, reconciliation with God, peace through a purified conscience, and hope for a new life (Rom 3:24; 5:1, 10-11; 6:18, 22; 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:11; 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 3:13; Eph 1:7; Tit 2:14; Heb 9:12, 14; 1 John 3:5).

This is the gospel message, and believers are called to faithfully proclaim it to the world (Matt 28:16-20; 2 Cor 5:11-20; 1 Tim 1:5; 2 Tim 4:1-2). The *manner* of their proclamation should not be harassing or harsh, but rather humble, compassionate, and kind. The *content* of the gospel, however, involves a call to repent of sin, a message which though unpopular and offensive to some, is nonetheless integral to the message and part of the church's loving mission to the world. It is not harsh, unloving, or hateful *to identify sinful behavior and as such* to warn the lost of coming judgment, or to direct them to the only means of deliverance, and proclaiming this message to others does not constitute hate speech.

14. STATEMENT ON THE MEANING OF MINISTER: The term “minister” has been used culturally to define a narrow group of individuals who hold a special office within the church responsible for carrying out certain “sacerdotal” duties. The New Testament, however, defines a minister in a much broader manner. The word “minister” translates the Greek term *diakonos*, a term that originally denoted a table waiter but eventually came to encapsulate the general concept of “service.” Throughout the New Testament, it came to form the foundational thought for the ministry of Christians because it was able, more than any other Greek term, to express the concept of loving service and care for others.

The term, in fact, derives its definition from the person of Christ himself and the gospel he preached. Service (i.e., ministry) is a distinguishing mark of Jesus' life. As the prophesied Servant of the Lord (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-7; 52:13-53:12), he fulfilled “by word and deed . . . the great themes of obedience, witnessing and suffering, climaxing His servanthood with the giving of His life for the world.” His own words testify to the fact that he “did not come to be served but to serve [*diakoneō*] and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matt 20:28; cf. Mk 10:45).

Scripture clearly teaches that the ministry modeled and lived out by Christ is to characterize the ministry of his followers. He taught his disciples that, contrary to the authoritarian manner of secular rulers, true greatness as a disciple of Christ involves a life of humble service (Luke 22:25-27; cf. Matt 20:25-27). As he washed the feet of his disciples, he told them, “If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him” (John 13:14-16)

Every Christian—those who have repented of sin and placed their faith in the redemptive death and resurrection of Jesus Christ—have been freed from the dominion of sin and the law and have become servants—ministers—of God. It is true that the term “minister” is used in conjunction with particular offices within the church (1 Tim 3:1ff). But, as Robert Saucy explains, “By choosing the term *diakonia* to describe the work of the ministry, the early church deliberately steered clear of the many alternatives which would have pointed toward the concept of *office* and distinction in rank.”

After an examination of the other possible word choices, Schweizer concludes that in *diakonia* "the New Testament throughout and uniformly chooses a word that is entirely unbiblical [non-Old Testament-based] and non-religious and never includes association with a particular dignity or position. Thus it can be applied to apostleship (Acts 1:17, 25; Col 1:25) as well as to all saints (Eph 4:12).

It is the ministry of the word (Acts 6:4), of reconciliation (2 Cor 5:18), of the new covenant (2 Cor 3:6), as well as serving tables (Acts 6:1). All in the church serve in the capacity received individually from the Lord (Col 4:17).

Christian ministry is intimately connected with the fellowship and body life of the church. When believers are saved, they are baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), and each given spiritual gifts. These gifts, called "ministries" by the apostle Paul (1 Cor 12:5), vary in function and expression, but all enable believers through the Holy Spirit to minister to the body for the mutual edification of the church, in preparation and anticipation of the Lord's return (Eph 4:1-16). All believers, then, become ministers to the church and the world, each tasked with the responsibility to exercise their specific ministries within the body according to how they have been gifted (1 Pet 4:10).

Ministry in the Christian life is a comprehensive idea, encompassing both body and life. It involves one's time, energy, and resources, regardless of whether one holds a particular office in the church. There are indeed certain gifts and ministries which warrant distinction for the orderly operation of the church. Thus, certain individuals are appropriately set apart "as being endowed for certain regular ministries." But their task is but one expression of the variegated ministries that make up life in the body of Christ and their office does not bifurcate the church into those who "minister" and those who do not.

Thus, everyone employed at Anchorage Grace Church—whether pastors, directors, secretaries, custodians, etc.—and all those who have committed themselves as members in the church— whether employees or volunteers serving in designated roles—are considered ministers whose responsibility is to minister to the body, model Christ to others, and represent and carry out the overall mission of the church. (*ARTICLE V, Membership* in this Constitution defines Anchorage Grace Church Members and specifically *Qualifications, Duties, Rights and Privileges, Discipline of Members, and Termination from Membership.*)