

# **Bylaws of Grace Church Hewitt**

**Adopted February 2, 2020**

## **Article I: Preamble**

We declare and establish these bylaws to preserve and secure the principles of our faith and to govern the body in an orderly manner. These bylaws will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in relation to other churches.

These bylaws are written to help Grace Church Hewitt (Waco, Texas), conduct its affairs satisfactorily as a corporate entity in this state. They do not replace Scripture; they stand under Scripture. They cannot guarantee a fruitful church; they must be handled in a spirit of loving cooperation with one another. Unlike Scripture, this document can and will be amended. It is a practical instrument for responsible self-governance, to fulfill the requirement of the state, to satisfy our own consciences with due diligence, and to ensure a credible testimony to our generation, for the sake of the gospel.

We pledge to abide by and to amend these bylaws according to Scripture and the laws of our state, for the greater glory of God.

## **Article II: Name and Purposes**

### **Section 1: Name**

The name of the corporation and church body is Stonegate Community Church, doing business as “Grace Church Hewitt.”

### **Section 2: Incorporation**

Grace Church Hewitt is a non-profit corporation and shall have all power, duties, authorizations, and responsibilities as provided for in the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Act, provided, however, the corporation shall neither have nor exercise any power, nor shall it engage directly or indirectly in any activity that would invalidate its status as a corporation that is exempt from federal income taxation as an organization described under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, or corresponding sections of any future tax code, or as a corporation of the contributions to which are deductible under Section 170(a)(1) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or corresponding sections of any future federal tax code. The corporation shall have all implied powers necessary and proper to carry out its express powers. The duration is perpetual.

### **Section 3: Purposes**

The corporation is organized to operate exclusively for any charitable, religious, or educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) if the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 by engaging directly in support of such purposes or by making distributions to other organizations that qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. Without limiting or expanding the foregoing, the immediate specific purposes for which

the corporation is organized are: 1) the public worship of God; 2) the teaching and preaching of the Word of God; 3) the fellowship of Christians; 4) the administration of the ordinances of the New Testament; 5) the assisting of young Christians in spiritual growth; 7) an active program of local and worldwide evangelism.

### **Article III: Affiliation**

Grace Church Hewitt is an independent, autonomous church, not subject to the control of any other ecclesiastical body, but only to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church (Ephesians 5:23). We also recognize the benefit of cooperation with other like-minded true gospel preaching churches. Grace Church Hewitt then has the right to cooperate and associate with outside groups on a voluntary basis, per the direction of the elders. Insofar as it is practical, we will associate with, cooperate with, and support local Baptist associations, the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC), the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT), and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

### **Article IV: Mission and Beliefs**

#### **Section 1: Mission**

The mission of Grace Church Hewitt is to glorify God by making Jesus known in our church, the city, and the world by making multiplying disciples of Christ.

#### **Section 2: Beliefs**

The elders and members of Grace Church Hewitt will look to the Bible as the recorded Word of God and the only authoritative text upon which to base Grace Church Hewitt's theological beliefs. Grace Church Hewitt holds to the beliefs outlined in The Baptist Faith and Message 2000 and Grace Church Hewitt's Statement of Faith.

### **Article V: Offices**

The Principal office for business transactions of Grace Church Hewitt, hereinafter may be referred to as the "Church," shall be located at 10020 Panther Way, Waco, TX 76712. The Elders have full authority and power to move the principal office from one location to another and to establish other offices, campuses, sites, and locations where the church is qualified under applicable laws to conduct its business.

### **Article VI: Membership**

#### **Section 1: Qualifications**

The congregation of this church shall be made up of the role of the church. To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration by living consistent to their profession of faith, who has been baptized by immersion, barring physical limitations, in obedience to Christ following his or her regeneration,

and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the church covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership in order to present them for admission before the members. In making the determination, they may rely on a person's baptism, transfer of membership, profession of faith, or other such evidence, as the elders deem appropriate. Those not under formal church discipline and living in faithfulness to their membership agreement are considered members in good standing. Affirming that children under the age of 18 can have a credible testimony of regeneration and ability and gifts to serve in the church, Grace Church Hewitt desires to prepare them for the responsibilities of church membership and will work readily with their parents or authority to decide at what age it is appropriate for them to assume the full responsibilities of a member. In the event of ongoing, unrepentant sin, the members of the church will place the primary, but not ultimate, mantle of leadership in church discipline on the child's (under 18) parents or authority, providing the child's parents are members of Grace Church Hewitt.

## **Section 2: Admission**

Admission of membership at Grace Church requires the following steps:

1. **Completion of Membership Class.**  
This class will be offered periodically in differing forms to instruct potential members in the purpose and responsibilities of membership, as well as the mission and doctrine of Grace Church Hewitt. Upon completion of the class, member candidates will fill out a membership application for the review of the elders.
2. **Elder Interview.**  
Each membership candidate will be interviewed by an elder of Grace Church Hewitt to assess the candidate's personal testimony, determine the integrity and validity of their faith, and discuss their desire to commit to Grace Church Hewitt by signing the church agreement.
3. **Vote of Affirmation.**  
Once the elders recommend a membership candidate for membership, members of Grace Church Hewitt will vote to affirm and admit a member candidate by a congregational vote requiring a majority of 80% or higher.
4. **Signing of Church Agreement.**  
Member candidates will sign the church agreement before the gathered congregation and then be presented for public affirmation and prayer.

## **Section 3: Responsibilities**

Members of Grace Church Hewitt are privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. It is the privilege and responsibility of each member to attend members meetings, to exercise voting privileges outlined in section Article VI, Section 4 of these bylaws and abide by their commitment outlined in the membership agreement.

## **Section 4: Voting and Other Privileges**

Members of Grace Church Hewitt are entitled to and expected to exercise voting privileges during respective member meetings, and member quorum will have the final authority on the following decisions by a majority vote of 80%:

1. The affirmation of new individuals into the membership of Grace Church Hewitt.
2. Removing existing members from the membership of Grace Church Hewitt as a final step in formal church discipline (excommunication), as outlined in Article VI, Section 5 of these bylaws.
3. Confirmation of pastor/elders into Grace Church Hewitt.
4. Making changes to the statement of faith, the bylaws, or membership agreement of Grace Church Hewitt.
5. Affirmation of each year's budget, as proposed by the elders.

Each member of Grace Church Hewitt in good standing (not under formal church discipline process) will be allowed one vote. Voting by proxy will not be allowed. The elders of Grace Church Hewitt may also call for a special vote or request congregational approval for any other matter.

## **Section 5: Church Discipline and Restoration**

### **VI.5.i: Church Discipline**

If a member of Grace Church Hewitt is consistently neglectful of his or her membership duties, consistently lives in unrepentant sin, or lives a life of inappropriate conduct by which the name of Jesus Christ is dishonored and the welfare of his church damaged, he or she may be subject to the discipline of the church. Church discipline is the biblical way by which the church holds its members accountable and provides a strength for their perseverance in the faith.

### **VI.5.ii: Examples of Disciplinary sins**

Though not an exhaustive list, the following sins are addressed by the New Testament Church and serve as examples of sin, which if unrepentant, might require church discipline: divisiveness (2 Thessalonians 3:11; Titus 3:10-11; Romans 16:17-20), irresponsible and undisciplined living (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15), sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1-13), and doctrinal heresy (1 Timothy 6:3-5; 2 Timothy 2:16-18; 2 John 1:10-11).

### **VI.5.iii: Purpose**

The purpose of church discipline is for the repentance, restoration, and spiritual growth of the individual(s) disciplined (Hebrews 12:1-11; Matthew 18:15-17; Galatians 1:6; 1 Corinthians 5:5). The end goal is not to punish or condemn, but it is the restoration and perseverance in the faith. It sets an example of instruction in righteousness for other Christians (1 Corinthians 5:11; 1 Timothy 5:20; Hebrews 10:24-25). Church discipline protects the purity of the church (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; Ephesians 5:27; Revelation 21:2), protects the corporate witness of the church

to non-Christians (Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:10-14), and reflects the glory of God by reflecting his holy character (Deuteronomy 5:11; John 15:8; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:12).

#### **VI.5.iv: Steps of Church Discipline**

In accordance with the biblical pattern outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, a member whose life evidences clear unrepentant sin will be initially confronted with a one-on-one meeting by another member of the church or by a pastor/elder. If repentance is not shown, or the pattern of sin continues, the Biblical model calls for further meetings with more than one member or with the elders. In such cases where these steps of informal discipline fail, with utmost patience and continual grace, the elders will consider placing the member under formal church discipline. The process of formal church discipline, as outlined in Scripture, involves public admonition before the gathered members of the church, a call to repentance and prayer for repentance by the members of the church via official mail and via other unofficial means (texts, calls, letters, etc.), and may include a prohibition from communion at the Lord's Table and participation in member meetings. If this step still does not result in repentance and a turning from habitual sin, the last step in the process of church discipline is for the membership of Grace Church Hewitt to formally remove the member under discipline from the membership of the church. This removal is done by a majority vote of at least 80% of the membership quorum.

#### **VI.5.v: Special Processes**

The elders of the church, after prayer and consultation with one another and the Scriptures, may choose to expedite the formal church discipline process. Elders are called to protect the flock and some forms of sinful conduct deemed harmful to the flock may require immediate attention and action (Acts 20:28-31; Titus 3:10; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5). However, for any formal removal from membership, the elders must still submit to the required congregational vote.

#### **VI.5.vi: Restoration**

The purpose of church discipline is always for repentance and restoration. If the offender demonstrates repentance at any point in the formal church discipline process, notice to that effect will be made publicly before the members of the church so that the church may rejoice and gently and judiciously restore the repentant believer to the fellowship of the church. Former members who have been removed from membership because of church discipline may regain membership status by meeting with an elder, receiving appropriate affirmation from the congregation, and by re-signing the church covenant.

### **Section 6: Termination of Membership**

Termination of membership at Grace Church Hewitt will be recognized by the church following:

1. Death of the member.
2. Transfer of membership by members in good standing to another church.

3. As the final step in the process of formal church discipline per the recommendation of the elders and as affirmed by appropriate congregational vote.
4. By personal request of a member in good standing.
5. Inattendance for 3 months, unless approved by elders. If the member is in the process of formal church discipline, the request to terminate membership may be denied until the disciplinary process has properly concluded.
6. Dissolution of Grace Church Hewitt.

## **Article VII: Meetings**

### **Section 1: Worship Meetings**

A regular corporate gathering will be held at least once a week on Sundays, unless otherwise determined by the elders. The purpose of the corporate gathering will be for worship through song, prayer, reading and teaching of the Scriptures, and partaking in the Lord's Supper through corporate communion. Believer's baptism will be regularly celebrated per the timing and direction of the elders. Other meetings of the corporate body for worship may be held throughout the week as the elders determine.

### **Section 2: Member Meetings**

#### **VII.2.i: Frequency**

There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every quarter, at some time apart from a public worship service, unless otherwise determined by the elders.

#### **VII.2.ii: Attendance**

All members in good standing may attend member meetings. Attendance will be recorded upon arrival. Unless otherwise specified by the elders, non-members allowed to attend include children of members, member candidates, and special guests approved or invited by the elders. Non-members in attendance shall not vote or discuss any matters during the meeting, and they may be subject to removal from the meeting by the elders at any point the elders deem necessary.

#### **VII.2.iii: Special Members Meetings**

The elders may call a special members meeting at any time. Special members meetings may also be called at the written request, submitted to the elders, of ten percent of the voting membership. In the event of a written request from the members, the elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request. The date, time, and purpose of any member requested special meeting shall be announced at all public services of the church within one week preceding the meeting. Additional communication to the membership is preferred.

## **VII.2.iv: Quorum**

In every meeting together, members shall act in that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration which is appropriate within the body of Christ. The elders shall oversee the members meetings, set the agenda, and appoint a moderator/emcee to lead the meeting. Provided the elders provide proper notice, a quorum shall be understood to be met by the members present.

## **Article VIII: Church Government**

### **Section 1: Authority**

We acknowledge that Jesus Christ is the head of and Lord of Grace Church Hewitt. In attempting to define how the authority in the universal church is passed on from Jesus Christ to individual local churches, we recognize that the New Testament nowhere prescribes a fully exhaustive form of church government, but instead prescribes certain practices, offices, and responsibilities. As these practices, offices, and responsibilities relate to functional authority in the church, the Biblical witness is clear on at least two realities:

1. It is the prescribed authority of the local church to exercise the practice of church discipline (Matthew 16:13-20; 18:15) on both members and elders (1 Corinthians 5:9-13; 2 Cor 2:5-8; 1 Timothy 5:19), and to keep watch over their collective doctrine and to look out for false teachers (Philippians 3:2; 1 John 4:1-6).
2. It is the prescribed reality that the New Testament teaches that elders are to have genuine authority that the church submits to—authority that the New Testament deems appropriate to describe as “ruling” (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:17).

In light of these realities, the Scriptures are clear that both the congregation and the elders have a shared authority, underneath the authority of Christ the head. The congregation’s authority is to be the binding and loosing in church discipline (Matthew 16:13-20; 18:15) and to keep watch over the doctrine of the church and who teaches there; the elders’ authority is to be that of “ruling” authority in all other matters of church governance and in equipping the saints for the mission of the church. This shared authority, for the purposes of Grace Church Hewitt, will be called “Elder-Led Congregationalism”. This language maintains the Biblical language of the elders’ authority to rule the Church of God, but grants the congregation rightful authority in specific areas prescribed by Scripture. In practice, Elder-Led Congregationalism, as maintained by Grace Church Hewitt, means all authority in church governance, except for the authority granted to the congregation as prescribed in Scripture, resides with the elders.

### **Section 2: Church Officers**

## **VIII.2.i: Summary**

For the sake of His church and per the example and command of Scripture, God has appointed two offices in the church: pastors/elders and deacons. A healthy New Testament gospel church should be officially led and served in at least these two primary ways. While other forms of

leadership or service in the church exist (staff, community group leaders, ministry team leaders, finance teams, etc.), any church offices not organized effectively into these two categories are extra biblical and should be considered with wisdom and care using biblical principles.

### **Section 3: Pastors/Elders**

It is the position of Grace Church Hewitt that the New Testament terms for pastor (poimen), elder (presbuteros) and likewise the term overseer (episkopos) speak to the same office in the church, with the same authority and responsibilities. A survey of appropriate passages includes: Acts 20:17-28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 5:17; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-2; Ephesians 4:1-11. This document uses the term pastor and elder interchangeably. The elders of Grace Church Hewitt shall exist in a team normally comprised of no less than two men; this office shall only be held by men. If at any time there remains less than three elders at Grace Church Hewitt, the elders may rely on an Interim Leadership Team, per the restrictions outlined in Article VIII, Section 7 of this document.

#### **VIII.3.i: Qualifications and Expectations**

The biblical expectations and qualifications for pastor/elders can be separated into three categories: character, calling, and ability.

1. Character.  
Pastor/elders should exhibit character in strict alignment with the qualifications for elders listed in 1 Timothy 3:2-7; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Titus 1:6-9. Since pastors/elders are to be examples to the flock (1 Peter 5:3), they should likewise exhibit healthy rhythms of life and godliness that all Christians are called to, setting an example “in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” (1 Timothy 4:12).
2. Calling.  
Pastors/elders should also exhibit a clear calling to the office (1 Timothy 3:1). That calling should be affirmed by others and personally discerned through patience and prayer. Calling also speaks to specific fit in a particular local church. A pastor/elder may feel called to the office generally, but not be a good fit (because of gifting, personality, chemistry, or other outside circumstances) to shepherd and lead as a pastor/elder at Grace Church Hewitt. In the expectation of calling, differences in doctrine of candidates with the agreed upon doctrine of the Church will be examined and assessed to make sure that the candidate is a good fit for pastoral ministry in Grace Church Hewitt and does not differ theologically or doctrinally on issues that would prevent them from serving faithfully and submitting humbly to the other pastors/elders. Elders shall agree with the Church’s Statement of Faith. The elder shall disclose any personal doctrinal difference to the elders if such difference should exist or arise during tenure as elder.
3. Ability.  
Finally, pastor/elders should exhibit a biblical ability and competency for eldership at Grace Church Hewitt. Pastors/elders are called to shepherd, care, and pray for the flock. They are also called clearly to be “able to teach” (1 Timothy 3:4; 2 Timothy 2:24) and to “give instruction in sound doctrine” (Titus 1:9). This means that pastors/elders must exhibit appropriate ability and competency in public teaching and preaching, as well as a



robust and appropriate grasp and understanding of sound biblical doctrine and diverse theological categories.

As a member of Grace Church Hewitt, an elder has all the responsibilities and privileges of a member. No elder shall hold the office of deacon during his time as an elder.

### **VIII.3.ii: Types of Pastors**

Grace Church Hewitt may have elders who serve vocationally as elders, employed through the work of the church, as well as those that serve as elders while serving vocationally in another field. Both vocational pastors and non-vocational pastors, also called lay elders or lay pastors, shall share equal authority in all the duties and responsibilities of their office. Biblically and functionally there is no difference among the elders, and all elders rule in matters designated to the elder team (all matters of church governance and ministry not specifically designated to the congregation) with equal authority.

The senior pastor shall be a vocational pastor recognized by the church as an elder particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. The senior pastor shall be an elder, fulfilling all duties and responsibilities as outlined in VII.3.iii. He shall preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties which usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the bylaws. The senior pastor may delegate these responsibilities to other elders or non-elders approved by the elder team.

The senior pastor shall have the primary responsibility for the supervision and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which can be delegated.

In the absence of the senior pastor, a search team, along with the elders, will recommend to the members a candidate for senior pastor.

The church may call additional vocational pastors whose relationship to the senior pastor is that of associate. The associate pastor shall be an elder, fulfilling all duties and responsibilities as outlined in VII.3.iii, and he shall be recognized by the church as an elder particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching.

He shall assist the senior pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties which usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the bylaws, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the senior pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

### **VIII.3.iii: Duties and Responsibilities**

The fundamental responsibility of the pastors/elders is to devote themselves to prayer and the ministry of the Word. The elders are responsible for ruling and governing the church within the authority given to them, for teaching the Word of God and tending to the flock of God in His church via intentional pastoral care. The responsibilities of the elders also include but are not limited to: interviewing prospective members; examining, assessing, training and nominating

candidates for the offices of the church; hiring, firing and dismissing Church employees and staff as prescribed in the constitution and bylaws; scheduling and moderating normal members meetings; conducting worship services, overseeing the administration of the ordinances of the church; equipping the saints for the work of ministry; teaching the whole counsel of God; counseling; visiting and praying for the sick; coordinating and promoting the various ministries of the church, and mobilizing the Church for the mission of God.

Pastors may designate certain specific responsibilities to members of the elder team by assigning them specific titles or roles. These titles are created and assigned according to the discretion of the elder team. Assignment of specific responsibility or title to specific elders does not designate a resignation of the duty of all elders collectively, but rather represents a desire to allocate specific responsibility for vision in ministry according to gifts, time, vocation, desire, and conviction. These titles or specific responsibilities should be held loosely in favor of the general duties and Biblical responsibilities given to every pastor/elder (to pray, to teach, to guard doctrine, to care/shepherd, to rule well, etc.). A designation or change of specific responsibilities or title for an existing vocational or lay elder must be publicly announced to the membership and requires a unanimous vote by the elder team.

#### **VIII.3.iv: Nomination, Affirmation, and Ordination**

The elder team is responsible for nominating elder candidates. A unanimous vote will be required for the elder team to nominate an elder candidate. For every candidate put forward by the elders, whether from within the congregation or outside of the congregation, an assessment and training period of at least 3 months will take place. In tandem with any necessary training, both the current pastor/elders and the congregation will have necessary time to assess the character, calling, and ability of the elder candidate.

During the assessment and training period, an appropriate biography and theological questionnaire will be available to the congregation, in order to help in the assessment process. If at any point in the assessment process the candidate is deemed by the current pastor/elders as failing to meet or unlikely to meet the expectations of the office, the candidate may be removed from the assessment period. This does not disqualify the candidate from any possibility of future candidacy.

After the allotted assessment and training period has passed, candidates will be brought before the members of the congregation for a vote. Every current elder must recommend an elder candidate to the congregation; no elders may abstain in the vote to recommend. The vote to ordain a candidate into pastoral office will require an 80% majority of the membership quorum in order to pass. Voting by proxy will not be allowed. After confirmation by a vote of the membership of Grace Church Hewitt, the elder candidate will be ordained in front of the gathered congregation into pastoral office.

If a man called to the office of vocational pastor is not a member of the Church, election of membership for he and his wife will be included in the vote of election to the pastorate. In such case, this vote will take the place of the membership process as outlined in Article VI, Section 2.

### **VIII.3.v: Removal**

An elder may be removed from office due to resignation or dismissal. A formal, written notice of resignation shall be required to be submitted to the elder team at least three weeks prior to resignation, barring personal or family emergency. An elder who resigns from office in good standing as a member of the church may be eligible for the office again, but must submit to a waiting period of at least one year and submit to the normal process for elder candidacy and confirmation upon return.

A written notice of the proposed removal of any elder shall be given to such elder at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which an action to effectuate such removal is to be taken, to ensure that the elder is given a reasonable opportunity to defend himself. The elder shall have the opportunity to answer the charges in the presence of his accusers, but shall not be present during the discussion and vote on his removal. Such removal shall take place only upon and after an 80% vote of the elders. The elder under consideration for removal shall not have voting rights while such removal is considered.

Any church member with reason to believe one or more elders should be dismissed due to disqualifying sin should first express concern directly to the elder in question, then to the elder team. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instruction of Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Timothy 5:17-21. If the evidence against the elder(s) in question is deemed to stand by 80% of the non-accused elder team, a proposal of removal will be submitted for review by the elder team. If the elder is removed due to disqualifying sin, the elders reserve the right to not disclose the details of the transgression, but must inform the congregation of the removal, in keeping with 1 Timothy 5:20.

If a church member has a reason to believe that all elders should be dismissed due to disqualifying sin, the accused elders and their accusers shall commit a process of at least three meetings in the course of a month's time, with the board of deacons present, in order to attempt to bring clarity and resolution. After a month's time, if a resolution has not been met, the charges of disqualification will be officially brought before the members of the church and a plain presentation of the details of the dispute will be given by the elders and deacons.

### **VIII.3.vi: Elder Meetings**

Regular meetings of the elders shall be held when necessary or needed as determined by the elder team. Any meeting of the elders may be held at the call of any elder, subject to giving adequate notice to the entire elder team. The meeting may be held at a designated time and place by the elder team. A proper quorum is defined as at least 2/3 of the elders present. A passing vote on all matters of church governance or ministry under the authority of the elder team not specified by this document shall be determined by a simple majority of all the elders. If allowed by the elders, other non-elders are allowed to attend but may not vote on matters discussed, and the non-elders may only enter discussion with elders permission. In the instance of the interim leadership team's existence as outlined in Article VIII, Section 7 the interim leadership team is allowed to attend, discuss, and vote in accordance with their responsibilities.

### **VIII.3.vii: Sabbaticals**

Vocational pastors who serve for two years continuously will be required to take a one month paid sabbatical without discontinuing other salary benefits, unless otherwise determined by the elders. Eligibility for paid sabbatical will renew every three years of service, and length of sabbatical will increase by one month for every three years of service, up to four months of eligible time.

Non-vocational pastors who serve for three years continuously will be eligible for a three month sabbatical. Eligibility for sabbatical will renew every three years of service, and length of sabbatical will remain a three month period. If a non-vocational pastor chooses to not take a sabbatical, he is required to take the subsequent eligible sabbatical, unless otherwise determined by the elders.

The purpose of sabbatical is for rest, time with family, communion with the Lord, and renewed vision for the work of ministry. Specific objectives for sabbaticals may be set on a case by case basis per the discretion of the elder team. The elder team reserves the right to recommend a sabbatical for one of its members at any time in order to promote healthiness, repentance, and continued faithful service. All sabbaticals will be served in consecutive months.

### **Section 4: Deacons**

The office of deacon and the qualifications for the office are described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. Deacons are the selfless servants of the church. Every deacon must be a member of Grace Church Hewitt in good standing. The church shall recognize men and women who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. The number of deacons will be determined by the needs of the ministry and the call and qualifications of church members.

#### **VIII.4.i: Responsibilities**

Deacons and deaconesses serve by caring for the members of the congregation, assisting and visiting those in need, and supporting new and existing ministries of the church. The elder team may designate specific roles of service to the deacons per need. The deacons may be organized in the most fitting way to accomplish the mission of the church.

#### **VIII.4.ii: Nominations and Selection**

Deacons will be nominated from within the church membership. From the nomination list, deacons will be chosen by the elder team for assessment and presentation of candidacy before the congregation. A character assessment period of at least two months will be required, after which the deacon candidate will be installed as a deacon and presented before the gathered membership of the church. Deacons may resign office with at least a two week notice to the elders, except in the case of personal or family emergency. The elders may dismiss a deacon from office with a 80% of the elders due to disqualification of character or a failure to fulfill the requirements of the office.

### **VIII.4.iii: Sabbaticals**

Deacons who serve for three years continuously will be eligible for a three month sabbatical. Eligibility for sabbatical will renew every three years of service, and length of sabbatical will remain a three month period. If a non-staff deacon chooses to not take a sabbatical, the deacon is required to take the subsequent eligible sabbatical, unless otherwise determined by the elders.

### **Section 5: Staff**

The elder team may establish paid and/or volunteer roles and ministry positions and teams to assist in fulfilling their responsibilities. The Church permits a church member to hold the office of deacon and staff simultaneously, as so far as the two do not conflict. Two types of staff positions will exist in Grace Church Hewitt: ministry staff and support staff.

1. Ministry staff will work in and operate under limited authority, per the direction and direct oversight of the elder team and/or a specific elder designated by the elder team. Ministry staff will be nominated, assessed, and hired by the elder team. The elder team must allow at least two months between nomination and hiring for the membership to help assess the candidate. All ministry staff shall be members of Grace Church Hewitt and shall meet the Biblical qualifications for deacons.
2. Support staff will work and operate in administrative roles not directly tied to ministry, including but not limited to bookkeeping, secretarial assistance, cleaning and facilities, and media/production. The elder team will be responsible for crafting and approving job descriptions, pay rate, and delegating specific responsibilities to ministry or support staff.

All staff will be required to submit to Grace Church Hewitt's Statement of Faith.

### **VIII.5.i: Supervision**

The elders have the responsibility for the hiring, supervision, evaluation, and dismissal of all staff positions. Action to hire or dismiss a member of the staff will be determined by a majority vote of the elder team. If deemed appropriate, the elders may delegate supervision and oversight responsibilities to a single elder or a smaller group of elders.

### **Section 6: Service Teams**

The team of elders may delegate certain of their responsibilities to individuals, teams, or other groups in the Church. This delegated responsibility remains under the oversight of the elders, at least one elder must be a part of every team formed, and all elders will have voting authority on all teams or groups appointed by the elders. Examples of service teams may include: pastoral search team, finance team, communications team, etc. The elders reserve the right to dissolve teams if they have served their purpose or no longer act as a benefit to the church.

## **Section 7: Interim Leadership Team**

In the event that there ever remains less than three active elders at Grace Church Hewitt, whether due to removal of elder(s), resignation of elder(s), personal emergency, or extended sabbatical of elder(s), the elders may deem it necessary to appoint interim leadership positions, consisting of capable men within or without the church, as part of an Interim Leadership Team (ILT). This leadership team will be tasked with performing many of the pastoral duties within the life of the church, but will not be given the office of pastor/elder. While it is possible and healthy that many of the men on the leadership team will aspire to and even receive candidacy for the office of elder, those men must still go through the normal elder process of training, assessment, and confirmation, in order to remain faithful to the Scriptural command to “not be hasty in the laying on of hands” (1 Timothy 5:22); ILT does not replace or expedite any elder confirmation process. If affirmed as an elder while on the ILT, a man would relinquish his role on the ILT and assume his new role as an elder of Grace Church Hewitt.

The ILT may also consist of and be led by an Interim Pastor, who will, unlike ILT, assume the office of pastor/elder, albeit with limited authority due to the interim nature of the position. The Interim Pastor will not hold any final authority or decision making power on certain matters of governance in the church, including change of doctrine/bylaws and hiring/firing of staff. Each ILT member will serve a minimum of *three months*, with possibility of renewal per decision of the pastors/elders towards a maximum end of *one year*. This structure is meant only to help the church return to a place of healthy, Biblical, eldership. The elders reserve the right to abolish the ILT at any time if this goal is not being met or if appropriate health is reached. Members of the ILT must be men and members of good standing in the church, or in the case of the Interim Pastor, a recommended and experienced man inside/outside the church who has gone through the appropriate appointment and confirmation process. These men must exhibit godly character in all areas of life, a healthy desire for the work at hand, and a minimum capability to fulfill their given responsibilities. The qualifications for a deacon in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 will serve as the standard for judging Godly character. ILT candidates will be unanimously nominated by the pastor/elders of Grace Church Hewitt and confirmed by the membership of the Church by an 80% vote. In the case of no elder team due to extenuating circumstances, the church membership will nominate ILT candidates to the rest of the membership, to then admit each ILT candidate by an 80% vote. Voting by proxy will not be allowed.

## **Article IX: Indemnification**

None of the pastor/elders or staff of the corporation of Grace Church Hewitt will be personally liable to the corporation for monetary damages for any act of commission in his/her capacity except to the extent a statute of the state of Texas expressly precludes elimination or limitation of such personal liability.

## **Article X: Financial Administration**

### **Section 1: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church will be the calendar year, beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31.

## **Section 2: Finance Team**

The elders will appoint a finance team to administer the funds of the church, made up of at least at least three members in good standing with Grace Church Hewitt. A chairman will be elected by the team to oversee bookkeeping and help provide regular quarterly and annual reports. While an elder is permitted to be on the finance team, he shall not be the chairman. The chairman is permitted to be a deacon.

An 80% vote of the finance team and the elder team will be required to incur debt on behalf of the church. An 80% vote will be required by the team and by the elder team to purchase or sell property. The finance team will meet at least quarterly and will provide a yearly financial report and a budget to the church to be approved by the pastors at least 1 month before the beginning of the new fiscal year. The proposed budget must then be submitted to the members to provide the membership the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback before voting for approval. The congregation must be notified of any unbudgeted expense approved by the pastors exceeding \$10,000 at least 2 months before the expense is made.

### **Article XI: Amendments**

These bylaws, policies, and procedures will be reviewed at least annually by the elder team. Any proposition for amendments, modifications, or changes will require a unanimous vote by the elder team, and will be presented before the congregation for approval and affirmation, requiring an 80% vote.

### **Article XII: Dissolution**

Grace Church Hewitt will be dissolved by a unanimous decision of the elder board and an 80% vote of the membership at a gathered members meeting. In the event that Grace Church Hewitt shall be dissolved as a corporate entity, the elders will have full authority and responsibility to distribute any assets of the corporation in a manner fully consistent with Article VI.02 Section 3 of the Texas Nonprofit Corporation Act and Relevant Regulations of the Internal Revenue Code. All assets will be distributed to other churches and/or class exempt organizations.