

**THE CONSTITUTION
OF
BRANDYWINE GRACE CHURCH**

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Article 1. Name | 3 |
| Article 2. Statement of Faith..... | 3 |
| Article 3. Statement of Mission..... | 5 |
| Article 4. Partnership | 5 |
| 4.1 Qualifications..... | 5 |
| 4.2 Applications | 5 |
| 4.3 Duties..... | 6 |
| 4.4 Meetings | 6 |
| 4.5 Affirmations | 6 |
| 4.5.1. Purpose..... | 6 |
| 4.5.2. Quorum | 7 |
| 4.5.3. Process | 7 |
| 4.6 Discipline..... | 7 |
| 4.6.1. Purpose..... | 8 |
| 4.6.2. Process | 8 |
| 4.6.3. Enactment | 8 |
| 4.7 Termination, Transfer and Associate Partnership | 8 |
| Article 5. Lead Pastor | 9 |
| 5.1 Qualifications | 9 |
| 5.2 Selection/Tenure | 9 |
| 5.3 Duties..... | 9 |
| 5.4 Lead Pastor Change | 9 |
| 5.4.1. Process | 9 |
| 5.4.2. Pastoral Search Committee | 9 |
| 5.4.3. Interim Lead Pastor | 10 |
| Article 6. Elders | 10 |
| 6.1 Composition..... | 10 |

| | | |
|---|--|-----------|
| 6.2 | Qualifications | 10 |
| 6.3 | Selection | 10 |
| 6.3.1. | Affirmation | 10 |
| 6.3.2. | Ordination | 11 |
| 6.3.3. | Tenure | 11 |
| 6.3.4. | Sabbatical | 11 |
| 6.3.5. | Duties | 11 |
| 6.3.6. | Meetings..... | 12 |
| 6.3.7. | Officers | 12 |
| 6.3.8. | Discipline | 12 |
| 6.4 | Resignation or Removal | 13 |
| Article 7. Deacons | | 13 |
| 7.1 | Composition..... | 13 |
| 7.2 | Qualifications..... | 13 |
| 7.3 | Selection | 13 |
| 7.3.1. | Affirmation | 13 |
| 7.3.2. | Tenure | 14 |
| 7.3.3. | Sabbatical | 14 |
| 7.3.4. | Duties | 14 |
| 7.3.5. | Resignation or Removal..... | 14 |
| Article 8. Finances | | 14 |
| 8.1 | Finance Team..... | 14 |
| 8.2 | Budget Affirmation | 15 |
| 8.3 | Compensation and Benefits Review | 15 |
| Article 9. Church Partnerships | | 15 |
| Article 10. Amendments | | 15 |
| Addendum 1. Statement on Gender and Marriage | | 16 |

The Constitution of Brandywine Grace Church

Article 1. Name

The name of this church is Brandywine Grace Church, referred to in this constitution as the “Church” or “BGC.”

Article 2. Statement of Faith

The Bible - We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Mark 13:31; John 8:31, 32; John 20:31; Acts 20:32)

The Triune God - We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons; that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct but harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence and redemption. (Genesis 1:1, 26; John 1:1, 3; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24; Romans 1:19, 20; Ephesians 4:5, 6)

God the Father - We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power and love. We believe that he infallibly foreknows all that shall come to pass, that he concerns himself mercifully in the affairs of men, that he hears and answers prayer, and that he saves from sin and death all who come to him through Jesus Christ. (Luke 10:21,22; Matthew 23:9; John 3:16; 6:27; Romans 1:7; 1 Timothy 1:1, 2; 2:5, 6; 1 Peter 1:3; Revelation 1:6)

God the Son - We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in his virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, and teachings. We believe in his substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal visible return to earth. (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38; John 1:1; 20:28; Romans 9:5; 8:46; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:21-23; John 20:30, 31; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:4; Acts 1:11; Romans 5:6-8; 6:9, 10; Hebrews 7:25; Hebrews 9:28; 1 Timothy 3:16)

God the Holy Spirit - We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. (John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26, 27; John 16:9-14; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; Galatians 5:22-26)

Mankind - We believe that man and woman were created by God in His own image; that they sinned and thereby incurred physical, spiritual and eternal death, which is separation from God; that as a consequence, all human beings are born with a sinful nature and are sinners by choice and therefore under condemnation. Unregenerate mankind is incapable of rectifying his sinfully corrupted state before God and is under the tyranny of sin and Satan. Apart from God's intervention, man remains eternally separated from God with no hope of salvation. (Genesis 1:26; 5:2; Genesis 3; Genesis 2:17; 3:19; Ecclesiastes. 2:11; John 3:14; 5:24; John 5:30; 7:13; 8:12; 10:26; Romans 9:22; 2 Thessalonians 1:9; Revelation 19:3, 20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:18; Psalm 51:7; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14; Romans 3:19; Ephesians 2:1-2; 2:12)

The Gospel – We believe that the gospel, or good news, is revealed in Jesus Christ. Through his perfectly obedient life and substitutionary death on the cross Jesus fulfilled man’s righteousness and bore his curse, making it possible for human beings to be reconciled with God. At the cross God reveals his love for mankind and his justice by expending his wrath against Christ, the sin bearer. Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and man. There is no other name by which men and women must be saved. For his willing and obedient sacrificial death, God the Father has highly exalted Jesus Christ and has appointed him Judge of all mankind and Savior of all who repent and believe upon him. This is attested to by Christ’s resurrection from the dead, which ensures the efficacy of his sacrifice on behalf of sinful man and displays him to be the sure object of saving faith and atonement for sins (Mark 1:1; Romans 5:10, 18-19; Galatians 3:13; 1 John 4:10; 1 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:23-26; 1 Timothy 2:5; Acts 4:12; Philippians 2:9-11; Acts 17:31; 1 Corinthians 15:17)

Our Response to the Gospel - We believe that the only appropriate response to the gospel is to repent of and forsake sin and to trust in Jesus Christ as Savior. This response is caused by the free and unconditional election of God and is brought about by the Holy Spirit through regeneration. Biblical repentance is characterized by a changed life, and saving faith is evidenced by kingdom service or works. While neither repentance nor works save, unless a person is willing to deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Christ, he cannot become his disciple. (Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9; John 1:13; Romans 9:16-18; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 3:8; James 2:26; Mark 8:34)

Our Inheritance Through the Gospel – We believe that all who come to Christ in repentance and faith are delivered from condemnation, become new creatures in Christ, are adopted as children of God and receive the gift of eternal life. They are declared by God to be forever righteous in his sight. The believer is forgiven the debt of his sin and liberated from the law of sin and death into the freedom of God’s Spirit. (Romans 8:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:5; Romans 8:14-17; Romans 6:23; John 3:16; Romans 4:5; Galatians 2:16; Ephesians 1:7; Romans 8:2)

Our Sanctification in the Gospel – We believe that the Holy Spirit is the active agent in our sanctification and seeks to produce his fruit in us as our minds are renewed and we are conformed to the image of Christ. Though remaining sin is a reality in our lives, as we are led by the Spirit we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, freely keep his commandments and endeavor to so live in the world that all people may see our good works and glorify our Father who is in heaven. All believers are exhorted to persevere in the faith, knowing that they will have to give an account to God for their every thought, word, and deed. Nevertheless, the believer’s ultimate confidence to persevere is based in the sure promise of God to preserve his people until the end, which is most certain. (Romans 8:9-11; Ephesians 4:22-24; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 John 3:9; Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Timothy 6:12-14; Romans 14:10-12; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24)

The Empowerment of the Holy Spirit – We believe that in addition to effecting regeneration and sanctification, the Holy Spirit also empowers believers for Christian witness and service. While all genuine believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit at conversion, the New Testament indicates the importance of an ongoing, empowering work of the Spirit subsequent to conversion as well. Being indwelt by the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit are theologically distinct experiences. The Holy Spirit desires to fill each believer continually with increased power for Christian life and witness, and imparts his supernatural gifts for the edification of the Body and for various works of ministry in the world. All the gifts of the Holy Spirit at work in the church of the first century are available today, are vital for the mission of the church, and are to be earnestly desired and practiced. (Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-7; Romans 8:9; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 7:7; 12:8-11, 28; Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11; 1 Corinthians 14:1, 39)

The Church - We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the Head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of baptized believers in Jesus Christ, associated for worship, work, and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world and making disciples of all nations. (Ephesians 2:19-22; Acts 1:8; Ephesians 5:19-21; Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:23-25; Matthew 28:19-20)

The Sacraments - We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two sacraments to the local church, baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion of the believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of his death by those who are his followers. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

The Distinction of Gender and Marriage - We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary, biological genders are determined at conception. Together these genders uniquely and exclusively reflect the image and nature of God. We believe that God created marriage to be exclusively the union of one man and one woman, and that intimate sexual activity is to occur exclusively within that union (Genesis 1:26-27; 5:1-2; Psalm 139:13-16; Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4). (See Addendum 1: Statement on Gender and Marriage)

The Last Things - We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal joy of the righteous and the endless suffering of those who have rejected Christ. We believe that the consummation of God's redemptive plan shall occur in the establishment of the new heaven and new earth at which time the dwelling place of God will be with his believing people. (Matthew 16:27; Mark 14:62; John 14:3; Acts 1:11; Philippians 3:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:15; 2 Timothy 4:1; Titus 2:13; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:1-58; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:4-6, 11-15; 21:1-4)

Article 3. Statement of Mission

Brandywine Grace Church makes it our collective aim to love God, one another and the world. Empowered by the Holy Spirit we seek to corporately and personally proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, cultivate its transforming effects upon our lives, and make disciples locally and abroad for the glory of our great Savior.

Article 4. Partnership

4.1 Qualifications

Partners of BGC must be persons who give a clear testimony and evidence of saving faith in Jesus Christ. Because of the responsibilities and accountability involved with church partnership, partners must be at least eighteen (18) years of age.

4.2 Applications

Applicants shall be expected to participate in BGC's partnership process, which includes the completion the Church's membership course, completion of a Partnership Profile (including agreement to abide by the Church Discipline and Conflict Resolution procedures of the

Church), and an interview with an elder. The interviewing elder shall recommend to the Council of Elders those who qualify for partnership. With the Council of Elder's approval, applicants will become partners of BGC and be announced to the congregation during a Sunday morning or partner meeting.

4.3 Duties

Partners of this Church are called to actively participate in our common doctrine, community and mission together. Specifically, BGC partners agree to a.) hold to the tenets of the faith described in the above Statement of Faith, b.) regularly attend Sunday gatherings and all partners' meetings, c.) pursue relationships within the church through small groups, ministry teams and other contexts provided by the Church, d.) give financially to the Church, e.) use their spiritual gifts to serve meaningfully in the life of the Church, and f.) participate in corporate and private initiatives to make disciples.

4.4 Meetings

The Elders shall convene a minimum of two (2) partner meetings per year. Additional meetings may be called at intervals that are deemed wise and edifying to serve the unity and solidarity of the congregation. An advanced, seven (7) day notice shall be given for all partner meetings.

A partner meeting shall be held during the first quarter of each fiscal year to discuss the church budget. A second partner meeting shall be held at a time deemed wise by the Elders and for the purpose of discussing and transacting important issues in the life of the Church.

Partners of this Church are called to actively participate in each partner meeting. Specifically, BGC partners are encouraged to a.) review each meeting's agenda prior to attending, b.) participate in discussions, either during or following the meeting via personal or electronic communication with a member of the eldership, in order to voice affirmations or objections, and c.) affirm matters offered to the congregation for such action by the Elders.

4.5 Affirmations

4.5.1. Purpose

The Church shall recognize the ultimate, benevolent rule of the Lord Jesus Christ who exercises his final authority through the means of the Holy Spirit and his written word, the Bible. As a demonstration of care, Christ has employed officers in his Church, namely elders, through whom he normally works to govern his Church (Ephesians 4:11-14; 1 Peter 5:1-3; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9). Scripture also reveals cooperative efforts between elders, deacons and congregational members on community life and mission (Acts 6:1-6, 15:22; Philippians 1:3-5; 2 Corinthians 1:24). These cooperative efforts show the responsibility of all Partners to be involved in the ministry of the Church, each doing their part for the growth of the body (Ephesians 4:15-16).

For the purpose of being faithful to the Biblical principles of elder leadership and congregational involvement, BGC shall abide by the following guideline: the Elders shall seek affirmation from the congregation on particular matters of the Church, although the final responsibility for these matters resides with the Elders who must give an account for their ministry (1 Corinthians 3:5-15; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Timothy

2:15). These particular matters shall include a.) the appointment and removal of elders, b.) the appointment and removal of deacons, and c.) the annual Church budget.

4.5.2. Quorum

A quorum of at least 2/3 of Partners shall be required for affirmation on matters mentioned in [Article 4, Section 5.1](#) above.

4.5.3. Process

The affirmation process for the above mentioned matters shall be as follows:

1. The Elders shall make a recommendation and share it with BGC Partners in a document and/or meeting.
2. BGC Partners will have at least two (2) weeks to provide feedback to the Elders expressing their support on the matter or suggesting a modification to the recommendation made.
3. The Elders will carefully consider any concerns raised by the congregation and may meet with individual partners to gain additional understanding whenever necessary.
4. An affirmation can be undertaken during a Sunday morning meeting or at a Partners meeting. Partners unable to make an affirmation meeting may submit their affirmation or denial in written or electronic form to one of the Elders. Absentee affirmations and denials received prior to the start of the affirmation meeting shall be counted at the time of the meeting. During said meeting a quorum document shall be signed by all Partners present and Partners shall either affirm or deny the recommendation put forth. Absentee affirmations and denials shall be counted toward the required 2/3 Partner quorum. In the event that a quorum is not reached the Elders may extend the time during which electronic affirmations or denials may be submitted for up to seven (7) days from the date of the affirmation meeting. The results shall be kept confidential until a quorum is reached and the recommendation is affirmed or denied. The Elders shall report the results to the Church no later than seven (7) days from the original affirmation meeting.
5. A matter shall be considered affirmed if 2/3 of the quorum affirms the decision proposed. If the recommendation does not get a 2/3 affirmation, the Elders can retract their recommendation, modify it, or provide more explanation in support of it, and then bring it back to the congregation at a future time.

4.6 Discipline

BGC Partners are to be consistent examples of authentic Christianity as they seek to emulate the character of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Partners of the Church will be taught and exhorted to conduct their lives according to the standards set forth in Scripture. Such conduct includes sexual purity, honesty and guarding the corporate unity and doctrine of the Church. Church discipline shall be enacted should a Partner persist in public, serious and unrepentant sin. (Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 4:1-6, 25, 5:18-21; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20; Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10-11)

4.6.1. Purpose

The purpose of church discipline includes a.) a call to the sinning member to repent and be restored to fellowship with Christ and his Church (Matthew 18:15-18), b.) a commitment to uphold the moral purity and blameless testimony of the Church (1 Corinthians 5:1-13), c.) an effort to protect others from the destructive effects of sinful activity (2 Thessalonians 3:6), d.) an aim to protect the Church from false teachers and division (Acts 20:30, Titus 3:10-11), and e.) a desire to uphold God's glory and the prevention of his gospel being maligned (1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 Peter 2:12).

4.6.2. Process

If a Partner continues in public, serious and unrepentant sin, the Church is committed to following the redemptive process as laid forth in Scripture. These biblical steps shall be taken in a spirit of Christian love, care and sensitivity: a.) privately go to the Partner to encourage repentance, b.) bring two or three witnesses if the Partner does not listen to the private encouragement to repent, c.) appeal to the straying Partner, along with an appropriate segment of the Church as determined by the Elders, if steps a.) and b.) do not produce restoration, d) the Elders shall terminate partnership and inform the excommunicated person to abstain from sharing in the Lord's Supper and possibly from all other forms of fellowship (e.g. BGC small group attendance), e.) the Elders shall notify the Church of partnership termination, and f.) Partners shall lovingly appeal to the former Partner to repent and be restored to Christ (Matthew 18:16-18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 11:27-32).

Though the above steps shall be the normal ones followed, the Council of Elders, upon unanimous agreement, may immediately excommunicate a Partner for an egregious sin publicly committed (1 Corinthians 5). Egregious sin shall be defined as an action condemned by Scripture and even by the surrounding, unbelieving culture (1 Corinthians 5:1). An immediate ruling for excommunication shall be for the purposes described in [Article 4, Section 6.1.](#)

4.6.3. Enactment

It is hoped that the preliminary steps of discipline outlined above will result in repentance on the part of the sinning Partner. However, if there is no indication of repentance after these steps are taken, the former Partner will be informed of their excommunication by an Elder in verbal or written form. The reasons for excommunication will be clearly stated. If after excommunication takes place the former Partner demonstrates biblical repentance and faith, he or she may be reinstated as a Partner in good standing with the Church.

4.7 Termination, Transfer and Associate Partnership

A Partner failing to share in the fellowship and responsibilities of the Church for a period of one (1) year shall, after reasonable attempts by an Elder are made to contact them, forfeit partnership. Partners in good standing shall, at their request, receive a letter of commendation from an Elder in order to transfer their partnership to another local church and terminate their partnership at BGC. Requests to terminate or transfer partnership while a Partner is undergoing church discipline will not be accepted until the discipline process is

complete. Partners who are excommunicated according to [Article 4.6](#) will have their partnership revoked. In the event that a Partner temporarily relocates they may request Associate Partner status for a maximum period of two (2) years. Associate Partners shall remain under the care of the Elders and the Church via communication with the Church and participation in fellowship whenever possible.

Whenever a Partner's membership is terminated or transferred the Elders shall briefly notify the Church at a Partner meeting. While maintaining commitments to confidentiality, an Elder may discuss further details of a person's departure from BGC with an inquiring Church member or pastor from another local church receiving the former BGC Partner if he deems necessary.

Article 5. Lead Pastor

5.1 Qualifications

The Lead Pastor shall be a man whose character and gifts conform to the biblical qualifications presented in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. Due to the duties described below the Lead Pastor shall exhibit distinct measures of gifting in teaching and leadership.

5.2 Selection/Tenure

The Council of Elders shall call the Lead Pastor for an indefinite term of service. The Lead Pastor's term of service may be terminated by either the Lead Pastor or the Council of Elders with a thirty (30) day notice or at any time that is mutually agreeable.

5.3 Duties

The Lead Pastor shall serve the Church as the "first among equals" among his fellow Elders. Though he shall be equal in his exercise of authority he shall be the leader or primary spokesman of the Council of Elders. His primary duties shall include leading the Church doctrinally through a prominent preaching/teaching role, providing care for the eldership and maintaining cohesion, efficiency, training and deployment amongst the Council of Elders. He shall be directly accountable to the other Elders who will advise, assist and evaluate him in his work.

5.4 Lead Pastor Change

5.4.1. Process

A proposal for the removal or repositioning of the Lead Pastor may be initiated by the other Elders or the Lead Pastor.

If removal or repositioning is deemed appropriate and/or necessary, the Lead Pastor shall relinquish his position within three (3) months or at a time that is mutually agreed upon by him and the other Elders.

5.4.2. Pastoral Search Committee

In the event that a new Lead Pastor is to be called, the Elders shall appoint a Pastoral Search Committee. The Committee shall consist of the Elders and at least one non-elder Partner and shall assume leadership in seeking a new Lead Pastor.

Once a new Lead Pastor is chosen the Elders will announce the selected candidate to the Church. If said candidate has not yet been so, he shall be affirmed as an Elder per [Article 4, Section 5](#).

5.4.3. Interim Lead Pastor

In the event that the Church is making a change in the role of Lead Pastor the Elders may appoint an interim pastor. The interim pastor shall serve for the ensuing year or until a regular Lead Pastor is called. An interim pastor shall normally not serve longer than one (1) year.

Article 6. Elders

6.1 Composition

Brandywine Grace Church shall be governed by a Council of Elders consisting of staff and non-staff Elders. To honor the principle of plurality, the Council of Elders shall ideally be made up of a least three (3) Elders, assuming elder qualifications are met. The Elders shall be equal in authority but may specialize in function.

6.2 Qualifications

Elders shall be men whose character and gifts conform to the biblical qualifications presented in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. In addition, the gifts and experience of the individual under consideration shall match the needs of the Church and the duties of the position and he shall be a Partner of good standing at BGC, affirming its statements of faith and mission.

6.3 Selection

Men shall be called by the Council of Elders to serve as fellow Elders of the Church as need arises in the congregation and in keeping with the biblical principle of raising up church leaders (2 Timothy 2:2). The unanimous affirmation of the Council of Elders and the congregational affirmation per [Article 4, Section 5](#) is required for an Elder's installment into his position.

Prior to expanding the eldership the Council of Elders shall take the following course of action: prayerfully identify and evaluate elder candidate(s) according to the qualifications laid out in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4, b.) notify the congregation two (2) months prior to expanding the eldership c.) put forth the name(s) of potential elder candidate(s) to the Church, d.) solicit the Church's support of or questions about the prospective elder(s) in relation to the aforementioned qualifications, especially seeking the input of Partners who know the candidate(s) well, and e.) put forth final candidate(s) to the Church for its 2/3 affirmation.

6.3.1. Affirmation

An Elder shall be affirmed in the following way: a.) the name(s) of the final elder candidate(s) will be sent to the church two (2) months prior to the date of affirmation, b.) Partners will take these two (2) months to prayerfully consider the candidate(s) and offer their support or ask questions about the candidate(s) with the Council of Elders, c.) if a concern exists regarding a candidate's eligibility for eldership, the Elders will inquire of the concern and re-evaluate the candidate if

needed, d.) if no concerns are raised or if those raised are resolved, the candidate(s) shall be put forth at a partner meeting or Sunday gathering for 2/3 affirmation.

6.3.2. Ordination

The purpose of Elder ordination is to formally appoint men affirmed by the Church who resemble the New Testament criteria for the office. The process of ordination shall be as follows: a.) a date shall be set for an ordination service and announced to the Church, b.) the Elder candidate and Church shall recite respective vows during the ordination service, c.) the Elders shall lay hands on the candidate recognizing him as one set apart for gospel ministry and the Church shall pray for the mercy and attendance of the Spirit of God upon his life. The month of said process shall commence the Elders term of service.

6.3.3. Tenure

Staff and Non-Staff Elders shall serve in their roles without any predetermined end date. Their service may be terminated by either the Elder or Council of Elders with a thirty (30) day notice or at any time that is mutually agreeable. In order to maintain continuity within the Council of Elders, Non-Staff Elders shall be asked to serve for a minimum of three (3) years.

6.3.4. Sabbatical

In an attempt to care for Non-Staff Elders, they shall be eligible for a three (3) to six (6) month sabbatical after three (3) years of service. Any period longer than six (6) months shall be considered a leave of service. Any Non-Staff Elder who chooses to take a leave of service must be reaffirmed prior to serving again as an Elder.

6.3.5. Duties

The Elders are responsible for lovingly governing the Church, devoting themselves to the teaching of the word of God and prayer, keeping a close watch on their lives and teaching and shepherding the flock of God as overseers (1 Timothy 5:17; Acts 6:4; 1 Timothy 4:16; 1 Peter 5:1-3). Specifically, the Elders duties consist of a.) personally, diligently studying the Bible and pursuing fervent prayer, b.) offering their lives as examples to the flock, c.) developing contexts for both the equipping and work of the saints in order to present them to God as mature in Christ, d.) mobilizing the Church to the world through local and global evangelistic and mercy ministry, e.) instructing and examining baptism and partner candidates, f.) admonishing and/or disciplining partners when needed, g.) caring for the sick, elderly, hurting, non-participating, etc., h.) promoting prayer within the fellowship, i.) overseeing the people, process and procedure for administering communion at the corporate observance of the Lord's Supper, j.) supervising the distribution of the benevolence fund, k.) establishing strategic short and long-term goals and objectives for Brandywine Grace Church, l.) clarifying and guarding church doctrine and/or practices, including the formulation of consequent church policies, m.) advising and evaluating the other Elders, including the preparation and/or revision of job descriptions, n.) appointing the Pastoral Search Committee if it becomes necessary to seek a Lead Pastor, o.) participating regularly and actively in the service and ministry of the Church, p.) raising up and training men who aspire to leadership

and maintaining an orderly succession of Elders, and q.) doing the work of an evangelist.

6.3.6. Meetings

Generally, the Elders shall meet at least twice each month. Special meetings may be called by the Lead Pastor or a majority of the Elders.

6.3.7. Officers

In the first Elders meeting of the year there shall be elected a chairman and a recorder from the Council of Elders. The Chairman shall manage the agenda for all Elders meetings and the Recorder shall keep minutes of all meetings.

6.3.8. Discipline

BGC Elders are to be consistent examples to the flock entrusted to them of authentic followers of Christ and as ones accountable to him as the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:3-4). In addition to the scriptural standards set forth for all believers, Elders shall abide by the standards specific to their office in the power of the Holy Spirit (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; James 3:1; 1 Peter 5:1-4). For the purposes described in [Article 4, Section 6.1](#) above and in order to provide accountability for BGC Elders, a discipline process shall be enacted should one of them deviate from scriptural mandates. Should charges be brought against an elder on the evidence of two (2) or three (3) witnesses, the discipline process shall begin (1 Timothy 5:19-21).

Process – The discipline process for an Elder shall be as follows: a.) The Council of Elders shall assume responsibility for the disciplinary process of an Elder in keeping with scriptural instructions and shall do so charitably, soberly, impartially and with an eagerness to maintain unity within the Church (Matthew 7:1-2; 1 Timothy 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:3), b.) A minimum of two (2) Elders, not including the Elder in question, shall be selected from the Council of Elders to investigate all charges being brought against an Elder. Investigations shall be as extensive as the situation warrants, shall involve all and only the pertinent parties related to the charges, and shall be conducted with every effort made to resolve the concerns to the satisfaction of those involved, c.) The Elders may consult the services of an outside reconciliation ministry or other qualified Partners if deemed necessary, d.) During the investigation, the Elder in question shall not be allowed to vote as an Elder and he may be placed on temporary leave with pay if he is a staff Elder, e.) Once the investigation is complete the results shall be put before the Council of Elders. If the charges appear credible, are substantiated by two (2) or three (3) witnesses, and involve any moral impropriety, doctrinal error, or any charge that is harmful to the witness of the Gospel and the Church, the Council of Elders shall vote on the innocence or guilt of the Elder in question, f.) A 2/3 ruling of the Council of Elders is necessary in order to find an Elder guilty of the charges. In deciding upon the consequences for an Elder found guilty of charges a 2/3 ruling is necessary to enact any action, up to and including removal from office.

Enactment - If the Council of Elders decides to remove the guilty Elder from office, they shall publicly rebuke him before BGC Partners (1 Timothy 5:20). Following this rebuke the Council of Elders shall send a letter to the congregation informing them of the guilty Elder's termination. If the accused Elder is found innocent, the Elder

shall be removed from his temporary leave and fully restored to ministry, including his ruling rights as an Elder. The Council of Elders shall determine what communication, if any, needs to be made to the Partners regarding the innocence of the charged Elder.

6.4 Resignation or Removal

Any Elder may resign by submitting a resignation letter to the Council of Elders. Upon formal acceptance the resignation will be considered effective. A proposal for the change of an Elder may be initiated by the Council of Elders. Upon this proposal the Council of Elders shall seek the feedback of the Partners. A recommendation for removal of an Elder will be enacted if a majority of the other Elders recommend this removal and 2/3 of Partners affirm the recommendation.

Article 7. Deacons

7.1 Composition

Brandywine Grace Church shall be served by Deacons that may consist of both men and women who lead the Church in meeting the practical needs of Partners and non-Partners through service and administration (Acts 6:1-6). The Diaconate shall be comprised of whatever number of deacons is required to execute their responsibilities per the needs of the Church.

7.2 Qualifications

Men and women who serve as Deacons or Deaconesses shall be those whose character and gifts conform to the biblical qualifications found in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13. In addition, the gifts and experience of the individual under consideration shall match the needs of the Church and the duties of the position and he or she shall be a Partner of good standing at BGC, affirming its statements of faith and mission.

7.3 Selection

Men and women shall be called by the Council of Elders to serve as Deacons of the Church as need arises in the congregation. The unanimous affirmation of the Council of Elders and affirmation from 2/3 of Partners is required for a Deacon's installment into his or her position.

Prior to adding more Deacons the Council of Elders shall take the following course of action: a.) prayerfully identify and evaluate the candidate(s) according to the qualifications laid out in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13, b.) inform the congregation two (2) months prior to adding more Deacons, c.) put forth the name(s) of potential candidate(s) to the Church, d.) solicit the Church's support of or questions about the prospective Deacon(s) in relation to the aforementioned qualifications, especially seeking the input of Partners who know the candidate(s) well, and e.) put forth final candidate(s) to the Church for its 2/3 affirmation.

7.3.1. Affirmation

A Deacon shall be affirmed in the following way: a.) the name(s) of final deacon candidate(s) will be sent to the church two (2) months prior to the date of affirmation, b.) Partners will take these two (2) months to prayerfully consider the

candidate(s) and offer their support or ask questions about the candidate with the Council of Elders, c.) if concerns exist regarding a candidate's eligibility for diaconate ministry, the Elders will inquire of the concern and re-evaluate the candidate if needed, d.) if no concerns are raised or if those raised are resolved, the candidate(s) shall be put forth at a partner meeting or Sunday gathering for 2/3 affirmation.

7.3.2. Tenure

Deacons shall serve in their roles without any predetermined end date. Their service may be terminated by either the Deacon or the Council of Elders with a thirty (30) day notice or at any time that is mutually agreeable. In order to maintain continuity among the Deacons, Deacons shall be asked to serve for a minimum of three (3) years.

7.3.3. Sabbatical

In an attempt to care for Deacons, they shall be eligible for a three (3) to six (6) month sabbatical after three (3) years of service. Any period longer than six (6) months shall be considered a leave of service. Any Deacon who chooses to take a leave of service must be reaffirmed prior to serving again as a Deacon.

7.3.4. Duties

Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the word of God. Their responsibilities may include: a.) assist with church finances, including the administration of a benevolence fund to assist the poor and needy and otherwise providing aid in times of crisis or distress, b.) managing mercy ministries aimed at meeting practical needs within the church, c.) administrating various meetings taking place at the church (i.e. Sunday mornings, Partner Meetings, Special Events), and d.) caring for and maintaining Church properties.

7.3.5. Resignation or Removal

A Deacon may resign by submitting a resignation letter to the Council of Elders. Upon formal acceptance the resignation will be considered effective. A proposal for the removal of a Deacon may be initiated by the Council of Elders. Upon this proposal the Council of Elders shall seek the feedback of the Partners. A recommendation for removal of a Deacon will be enacted if a majority of Council of Elders recommend this removal and 2/3 of Partners affirm the recommendation.

Article 8. Finances

8.1 Finance Team

The Finance Team shall be composed of at least one member of the Council of Elders and a minimum of three (3) lay Partners of the Church. Elders and Deacons serving on this team shall do so in conjunction with their term of service for each respective role. Lay Partners serving on the Finance Team shall be chosen by the Elders. Lay Partners shall be eligible for a one (1) year sabbatical after serving a three (3) year term on the Finance Team. Terms of service shall be monitored by the Elders.

The Finance Team shall monitor the financial affairs of the Church. Specifically, this said team shall: a.) help the Council of Elders formulate an annual church budget that is consistent with the approved ministry strategies, goals and objectives of BGC, b.) provide accountability to the Council of Elders so as to ensure fiscal matters are conducted per the guidelines set forth in Church's By Laws, Section 9, c.) make recommendations to the Council of Elders regarding the purchase or sale of property, the borrowing of money and the establishing of special offerings or funds and capital expenditures, and d.) keep the Council of Elders and the Church informed regarding the financial status and/or needs of the Church.

8.2 Budget Affirmation

The Finance Team shall develop and recommend an annual budget to the Council of Elders. The Elders shall approve and submit the budget to Partners in order to solicit feedback and questions. The budget shall be affirmed upon 2/3 congregational affirmation as per [Article 4, Section 5](#).

8.3 Compensation and Benefits Review

A full compensation review shall be conducted annually for each full, part-time or 1099 contracted employees of the Church. The review shall be conducted by a team comprised of all Non-staff Elders and all non-staff Finance Team members (i.e. Compensation and Benefits Team). A majority affirmation by the Compensation and Benefits Team will determine compensation and benefit levels of all full time, part time and 1099 employees of the Church. Any review or change to compensation or benefits outside of the annual review must be affirmed by this same composite group.

Article 9. Church Partnerships

Brandywine Grace Church believes in the value of partnerships with other gospel-centered churches and extra-local ministries for the purposes of mission and accountability. To this end we will actively pursue these partnerships with those that share our doctrinal convictions and missional values. Decisions to formally partner with other local churches, a denomination or extra-local ministry will only be made per the unanimous affirmation of the Council of Elders.

Article 10. Amendments

Amendments to this constitution may be recommended by the Elders or Partners of the Church. Amendments shall be made per the unanimous affirmation of the Council of Elders.

Addendum 1. Statement on Gender and Marriage

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning – the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Hebrews 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman (1 Corinthians 6:15-20).

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 1 Timothy 1:8-11; Leviticus 18:20, 22-23; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8).

We believe that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of BGC.