

**Auburn Grace Community Church**  
Constitution and Bylaws

The Constitution of Auburn Grace Community Church is the Bible. God's Word, comprised of sixty-six books, which are inspired and inerrant in the original manuscripts. As God's perfect and complete Word, the Constitution cannot and shall not be amended (2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Revelation 22:18-19).

The practical understanding and application of this Constitution as to the life and ministry of Auburn Grace Community Church shall be under the leadership and direction of its Elder Board (Hebrews 13:17), in keeping with the Statement of Faith.

BYLAWS

**ARTICLE I — NAME**

This church shall be called Auburn Grace Community Church.

**ARTICLE II — PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES**

**Section 1 — Purpose.** The basic purpose of our church is to glorify God (1 Corinthians 10:31).

**Section 2 — Objectives.** It is the plan and intent of our church to glorify God in four ways:

1. EXALTATION OF GOD. The lifting up and honoring of the name of the triune God through worship, praise, music, prayer, giving, teaching and godly living. (*Matthew 4:10, Revelation 4:11*)
2. EVANGELISM TO THE LOST. The proclaiming of the gospel message to the non-believing world which results in (a) their confession of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior; (b) their baptism in water as an act of obedience, public confession and identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ; and (c) their membership in the local body of believers, the church. This includes the recruitment, training, sending and supporting of missionaries from this local church. (*Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16, Luke 24:47-48, Acts 1:8, 2 Corinthians 5:20*)
3. EDIFICATION OF BELIEVERS. The bringing of Christians to completion and maturity in Christ through teaching, training, equipping and growth in the exercise of spiritual gifts, and ministering to one another by demonstrating love, friendship, help, care, submission and encouragement. (*Colossians 1:28-29, Ephesians 4:11-16, 1 Peter 4:8-11, John 14:34-35*)

4. **EXPANSION OF THE CHURCH.** The expansion of the church is the plan by which the Word of God is spread throughout the community and the world. This plan includes the recruitment, training, sending and supporting of missionaries from this local church who seek to fulfill the objectives of this church; it also includes the promotion and distribution of the Word of God by various means. (*Acts 13:1-4, 14:21-28, 1 Corinthians 9:7-14, 1 Thessalonians 1:5-8, Matthew 28:19-20, Acts 1:8*)

### **ARTICLE III — AUTHORITY**

**Section 1.** The primary authority in this church rests in Jesus Christ, as the head of the church. This authority has been transmitted through and is expressed within the completed Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

**Section 2.** The secondary authority in this church rests in its members and elders, who exercise their authority by carrying out their responsibilities as set forth in these bylaws. The members and elders are accountable to both Jesus Christ and one another.

**Section 3.** The church is incorporated and chartered under the laws of the State of California.

**Section 4.** The property and facilities of this church are dedicated to its purpose and objectives. Upon the liquidation, dissolution or abandonment of the corporation, the property, facilities and funds will not inure to the benefit of any private individual, but at least 50% will be directed to the benefit of Charis Fellowship and its ministries, and any remaining assets will be directed to a fund, foundation or corporation organized and operated for like religious or charitable purposes, as determined by the Elder Board and confirmed by the congregation.

### **ARTICLE IV — MEMBERSHIP**

**Section 1.** Membership in this church consists of such persons who have (a) confessed Jesus Christ to be their personal Lord and Savior and have been baptized as believers in water by immersion according to Matthew 28:20 in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; (b) are willing to submit to the authority of the church in matters of spiritual life and discipline; and (c) have submitted a written application requesting membership that has been approved by the Elder Board, or a committee appointed by the Elder Board.

**Section 2.** All members have the right and responsibility of participating in the ministries of the church, as designated and under the guidance of the Elder Board. Those members who are 16 years of age and over have the further right and responsibility of voting in the business meetings of the church.

**Section 3.** In the event that any member believes that any procedure of the church is in violation of the church's constitution or bylaws, that person shall have the right to seek

clarification of the situation or an explanation from an individual member of the Elder Board. If not satisfied, he or she may present their case in writing to the Elder Board. If the member is not satisfied by the Elder Board's decision, the Board may establish a group of three members who are not currently serving as elders, to act as witnesses and present a recommendation to the Elder Board (Matthew 18:15-20).

**Section 4.** A member may be removed from the membership roll or dismissed for any of the following reasons:

- a. Upon the member's written request for transfer or withdrawal.
- b. Continued lack of interest and attendance at the services of the church. If such a condition continues for a period of six months, the church may send a written notification to the member. If it does not receive any comment from the member after three more months, removal may take place upon the decision of the Elder Board. In no case is the Elder Board required to remove the member, if it believes the member desires to continue in membership.
- c. A member departs from the faith by (a) advocating or teaching doctrine, or (b) distributing literature that is contrary to the church's "Statement of Faith" after reasonable efforts have been made by the Elder Board to clarify and correct the member's activities.
- d. A member continues in sinful practices without repentance. Such action of dismissal shall be regretfully made under the direction of the Elder Board in harmony with the steps of church discipline outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, and in the ultimate pursuit of repentance and restoration of the member.

## **ARTICLE V — ELDERS**

**Section 1.** Men whose lives manifest the qualities of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 may serve as elders upon the recommendation of the existing Elder Board, and the subsequent affirmation by the membership (Acts 14:23). Candidates to serve as lay elders must have been members of our church for at least the year prior to taking office; such requirement shall not apply to the Senior Pastor, who serves as an elder as a condition of his employment. If recommended and affirmed by the process above, other pastors or staff members of the church may serve only as non-voting elders; upon their resignation from the church staff, they shall then be eligible to be recommended and affirmed as voting elders if the existing Elder Board so determines.

**Section 2.** The Elder Board is responsible as a collective body for the oversight and direction of all matters of church life and practice. They do so through the Senior Pastor, who is accountable

to the Elder Board for his actions and leadership. The Elder Board may appoint committees to assist in its work, as it deems necessary (1 Timothy 3:4-5, 5:17).

**Section 3.** The Elder Board shall collectively serve as the corporate officers of the church. If governmental bodies require the designation of individuals to specific corporate offices, the Elder Board will select from its members individuals to hold these offices for a prescribed period of time, which shall not exceed the time they serve as an elder.

**Section 4.** During the first meeting of each fiscal year, the Elder Board shall appoint the following officers. All officers shall serve at the pleasure of the Elder Board and may be replaced by majority vote at any meeting.

- a. **Board Chairman.** The Board Chairman's duties include scheduling meetings, presiding at meetings and calling for motions and votes as necessary. The Senior Pastor is not eligible to serve as Board Chairman.
- b. **Board Vice Chairman.** The Board Vice Chairman will step in for the Board Chairman during any absence or vacancy. It will be customary for the Board Vice Chairman to be the immediate past Board Chairman. The Senior Pastor is not eligible to serve as Board Vice Chairman.
- c. **Board Secretary.** The Board Secretary's duties include taking minutes of each meeting, and preparing the agenda for the next meeting. The Senior Pastor is eligible to serve as Board Secretary.
- d. **Board Treasurer.** The Board Treasurer's duties include meeting from time to time with the church's bookkeeping staff, consulting with the church staff on the development of the annual budget, and ensuring that all elders are kept well informed about the church's financial condition. If circumstances warrant, the Elder Board may appoint a non-elder to this role. To the extent possible, the Senior Pastor will not serve in this role.

**Section 5.** Elder Board meetings shall be scheduled and noticed on a regular basis by the Board Chairman. All meetings of the Elder Board require a majority of the elders to be in attendance, either in person or via teleconference, to meet quorum. Emergency meetings may be called by the Board Chairman or Senior Pastor whenever a quorum of the elders are available to meet. Any elder may call a meeting of the Elder Board with five (5) business days' notice.

**Section 6.** The Senior Pastor shall always be recognized and serve as an elder, with a term concurrent with his employment by the church. All other elders shall serve in three year terms. If at the end of an elder's three year term, the remaining elders unanimously request that he continue his service, he shall be eligible to serve for another term.

**Section 7.** Any elder wishing to resign prior to the conclusion of his term shall provide a letter of resignation to both the Board Chairman and the Senior Pastor. Elders agree to provide thirty

(30) days' notice prior to a resignation taking effect, if at all possible. The Elder Board shall notify the members of the church of any elder's resignation within two weeks of it taking effect.

**Section 8.** Any elder other than the Senior Pastor can be removed by a unanimous vote of all the other elders. The elder in question must receive at least 24 hours' notice of the intention to hold a vote for removal. The Elder Board shall notify the members of the church of any elder's removal within two weeks from their removal.

**Section 9.** To the extent possible, lay elders will comprise a majority of the Elder Board. If at any time, the number of lay elders falls below a majority, the Elder Board shall notify the members of this fact within two weeks, and will prayerfully begin seeking new members who may be qualified to serve as an elder.

**Section 10.** No accusation shall be made or entertained against an elder, except in the manner and process set forth in 1 Timothy 5:19.

#### **ARTICLE VI — DEACONS AND DEACONESSES**

**Section 1.** Men and women who exemplify the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 may be appointed as Deacons and Deaconesses by the members of the church. The Elder Board shall determine the process by which they are chosen.

**Section 2.** The Senior Pastor will appoint one of the church's pastors to oversee the work of the Deacons and Deaconesses.

**Section 3.** Deacons and Deaconesses are responsible for the performance of the various ministries of the church, meeting the needs of all people served by our church, under the direction and oversight of the Elder Board, and the overseeing pastor.

**Section 4.** All Deacons and Deaconesses serve for a term of two years, and may serve successive terms if asked to do so by the overseeing pastor. After three successive terms, they must be reaffirmed by the members of the church.

**Section 5.** Deacons and Deaconesses shall agree to focus on individual areas of service or ministry within the church, so that the entire Body of Christ can flourish and thrive. The overseeing pastor will direct the work of the deacons and recommend the expenditure of funds, which require the approval of church staff within their budgetary authority, or of the Elder Board.

**Section 6.** Candidates to serve as Deacon or Deaconess must have been members of our church for at least the year prior to taking office.

## **ARTICLE VII — CHURCH STAFF**

**Section 1.** The church staff includes all men and women who are employed by the church.

**Section 2.** The Elder Board delegates all authority over and responsibility for the church staff to the Senior Pastor.

**Section 3.** The Senior Pastor shall be responsible for implementing an effective organizational design that provides all members of the church staff with direction and supervision in their responsibilities and duties. The Senior Pastor is the sole member of the church staff who is directly accountable to the Elder Board.

**Section 4.** The Elder Board is responsible for budgeting funds for the employment of church staff, and must advise and consent on the Senior Pastor's decisions to hire or terminate any full time staff members. Beyond that, the Elder Board generally delegates its legal authority on matters of the church staff to the Senior Pastor, and/or other leaders he may designate.

**Section 5.** Employment policies, procedures and job descriptions for church staff shall be developed by the Senior Pastor and/or other leaders he may designate.

## **ARTICLE VIII — SENIOR PASTOR**

**Section 1 — Call.** The Senior Pastor's call to ministry at our church shall be for life. When a vacancy occurs, one candidate at a time shall be recommended to the church by the Elder Board, and an affirmative vote of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the members present and voting shall confirm the appointment of a new Senior Pastor.

**Section 2 — Duties.** In addition to the responsibilities of serving as one of the Elders, the Senior Pastor shall provide leadership for the congregation and the church staff. He shall consider his primary responsibility that of edifying the saints in accordance with Ephesians 4:11-16. In addition to preaching and teaching the Word of God, he shall set a pattern of good works commensurate with his office.

**Section 3 — Resignation.** The Senior Pastor may voluntarily resign by written notice to the Elder Board and then to the congregation at any regular service or business meeting. He agrees to provide at least thirty (30) days written notice before his resignation takes effect, if at all possible.

**Section 4 — Removal.** If the Senior Pastor fails to meet the qualifications of an elder as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9, or fails to meet his ministry obligations as defined in his job description by the Elder Board, he can be removed from office.

First, three-quarters (3/4) of the elders other than the Senior Pastor must vote to remove him

for one or both of these causes. If such a motion passes, the Senior Pastor must be immediately notified if he is not present, and he will be placed on administrative leave, with pay, until a congregational vote is called. The Elder Board shall designate an interim leader for the church staff until the matter is resolved.

A congregational meeting must be called by the Board Chairman for not less than fourteen (14) but not more than twenty-one (21) days after the vote of the Elder Board. An affirmative vote of at least three-quarters (3/4) of the church members present and voting at the congregational meeting are required to make the removal effective.

## **ARTICLE IX — CHURCH BUSINESS AND FACILITIES**

### **Section 1 — Third Party Organizations.**

- a. Only those third party organizations that are approved and supervised by the Elder Board shall be recognized as a part of the church program and ministry.
- b. These organizations shall have no authority in themselves other than what is delegated to them by the Elder Board.
- c. All activities of these organizations must be planned and coordinated in cooperation with the church staff in order to limit conflicts as to the use of facilities or duties involved. The church staff, or Elder Board (if needed), shall resolve any conflicts which arise concerning the use of the facilities. In resolving such conflicts, priority shall be given to the activities of the local church.
- d. All such organizations must be committed to the purpose and objectives of the church and be supportive of our “Statement of Faith” as outlined in Article X. The Elder Board shall determine that such a commitment exists prior to entering into any obligations with such organizations. In the event that a conflict should subsequently arise or be discovered, the matter shall be examined by the Elder Board, who shall determine whether the organization should continue to be recognized as a part of the program and ministry of the church.

**Section 2 — Use of Facilities.** The Elder Board has delegated its authority to determine which meetings, gatherings, events or activities shall be conducted in the facilities of the church to the Senior Pastor and/or other leaders he may designate. The church may not operate the facility for profit, but may charge the actual costs of maintaining the facility, including clean-up, utilities and mortgage expense.

### **Section 3 — Congregational Meetings.**

- a. Congregational meetings shall be called from time to time by the Elder Board, and if at all possible, shall be held no less frequently than once per year. Public announcement and written notice of a congregational meeting shall be made in the regular Sunday services of the church at least two (2) weeks in advance of the meeting, specifying its time and location.
- b. The Elder Board shall designate one of the elders to moderate any congregational meetings of the church.
- c. At any congregational meeting, the members present shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. A majority vote of the members present at any congregational meeting shall prevail, unless otherwise stated in these bylaws. The manner in which the vote is taken shall be at the option of the moderator of the meeting, with the exception that the Senior Pastor, Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses shall be affirmed by secret ballot.
- d. Elders, Deacons and Deaconesses must receive affirmation by a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members present and voting in order to be selected.
- e. The Senior Pastor must receive affirmation by a three-quarters (3/4) majority of the members present and voting in order to be confirmed.
- f. In case of a question regarding parliamentary procedure during congregational meetings, "Robert's Rules of Order" shall be used as a guideline, but shall not be considered binding.

**Section 4 — Indemnification.** Each existing or former member of the Elder Board, Pastors, Deacons, Deaconesses, and each existing or former officer or staff member of this corporation shall be indemnified by this church against expenses reasonably incurred by him or her in connection with any action, suit or proceeding to which he or she may be a party by reason of being, or having been a member of a Board, an officer, or a staff member of this corporation, except in relation to matters as to which he or she shall finally be adjudged in such action, suit or proceeding to have been derelict in the performance of his or her duty as a member of these Boards, an officer or a staff member.

### **ARTICLE X — AMENDMENTS**

**Section 1.** These Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the members at any congregational meeting, provided notice of the meeting has been given by public announcement in the regular services of the church at least two (2) weeks in advance, stating



the time and location. Such notification shall include a printed statement of the present reading and the proposed change.

## **ARTICLE XI — STATEMENT OF FAITH**

**Section 1 — The Center.** We declare that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God as revealed in the Bible, the written Word of God, is the only Savior and Lord. He is the center of our shared experience of true biblical unity. (*John 1:1-14, Matthew 5:17-18, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Psalm 19:7-11, John 14:6, Acts 4:12, 1 Corinthians 12:3, Romans 10:9, Philippians 2:9-11*)

**Section 2 — The Evangelical Core.** We affirm our commitment to the following core truths of the Bible which we share with other genuine believers in Jesus Christ.

- a. **The One True God.** There is one, and only one, true God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He is the Creator and Lord of all, existing eternally in three persons, never less and never more — Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (*Deuteronomy 6:4, Isaiah 43:10, 1 Corinthians 8:4-6, 1 Timothy 2:5, Matthew 22:32, Acts 3:13, Genesis 1:1, Psalm 146:6, John 1:3, Colossians 1:16-17, Matthew 28:19, Luke 3:22, 2 Corinthians 13:14*)
- b. **The Lord Jesus Christ.** Jesus Christ is fully God, existing eternally. Everything was created by Him and for Him. His incarnation took place in the womb of a virgin. He became man, but never sinned. He died a substitutionary death to atone for sin, resurrected bodily, and ascended into heaven where He remains fully God and fully man, and is presently ministering until He comes again. (*John 1:1-3, John 8:58, Titus 2:13, Romans 11:36, Colossians 1:16, John 1:14, Matthew 1:18-23, Luke 1:29-35, Luke 2:52, John 19:28, Philippians 2:6-8, Hebrews 4:15, 1 Peter 2:22, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Peter 2:24-25, Luke 24:36-43, Romans 1:4, 1 Corinthians 15:3-8, Acts 1:9, Hebrews 4:14, Ephesians 1:19-23, Hebrews 4:15-16, Acts 1:11*)
- c. **The Holy Spirit.** The Holy Spirit is fully God, existing eternally. He is a person, and was involved in Creation and the inspiration of Scripture. His works of convicting and regenerating are essential to the believer's salvation. Believers are entitled to the benefit and joy of being filled and walking in the Spirit for empowerment in Christian life, service and mission. (*Acts 5:3-4, John 16:7-15, Genesis 1:2, 2 Peter 1:21, John 16:8-11, Titus 3:5, Ephesians 5:18, Galatians 5:16, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 3:16-21, Acts 1:8*)
- d. **The Bible.** The sixty-six books, and only these, known as the Old and New Testaments, are the written Word of God. God's inspiration and superintendence of the writing of every word of the Bible guarantees that what was written is His Word and therefore authoritative, true, and without error in the original manuscripts. God preserves His Word, which is powerful and effective to accomplish his purpose of salvation among all

nations. God's Spirit illumines the minds of believers in every culture to understand and apply the unchanging truth of Scripture in fresh and relevant ways for the benefit of the whole Body of Christ. (*Luke 24:25-27, 1 Peter 1:23-25, 2 Timothy 3:16, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Psalm 19:7-11, Psalm 119:89, Psalm 119:160, Romans 1:16, Romans 10:8-17, Romans 16:25-27, 1 Corinthians 2:9-16, Ephesians 1:17-23*)

- e. **Humanity.** God created man and woman in His image. As a result, all people are bearers of that image. However, Adam's subsequent sin resulted in a condition of spiritual death which all people since Adam have experienced, marring the beauty of God's image in them in every facet of life. This condition of spiritual death has rendered all people unable to save themselves, and leads to physical death. Therefore, new birth is necessary for salvation. (*Genesis 1:26-28, James 3:9, Genesis 3:1-24, Romans 5:12-19, Romans 6:23, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 8:6-8, Genesis 2:17, Romans 5:12, John 1:12, John 3:3-5*)
- f. **Salvation.** The salvation brought by God is a complete and eternal salvation by His grace alone, received as the free gift of God through personal faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work, as He declares believers righteous in Him. (*Romans 5:1, Ephesians 2:4-9, Titus 3:5-7, 1 Peter 1:18-21, Hebrews 9:12, Hebrews 10:14*)
- g. **Church.** There exists one true Church, which is called the Household of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit. It is comprised of all true disciples of Jesus Christ and is created by the action of the Holy Spirit. Tangible expressions of this true Church are found in local churches. (*1 Peter 4:17, Ephesians 2:19-20, 1 Timothy 3:14-15, 1 Corinthians 12:27, Ephesians 1:22-23, 1 Corinthians 3:16, Ephesians 1:21-22, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Hebrews 10:25, Galatians 1:2, Romans 16:4-5, Revelation 2:1-18, Revelation 3:1-14*)
- h. **Great Commission.** God commanded all believers to preach the Gospel and to make disciples of all nations. Every believer is to be a witness for Jesus Christ, trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit. We are responsible to pray for, support and send missionaries out into the world.
- i. **Christian Life.** The believer is saved by faith alone. The faith that saves is expected to produce obedience and good works, which are the products of the indwelling Holy Spirit. The dimensions of biblical ethics are both individual and social, and extend to every facet of life. God faithfully continues to finish the work of sanctification, which He initiated in the life of each believer with the goal of Christlikeness. (*Romans 4:5, Romans 1:5, James 2:14-17, Titus 3:8, Galatians 5:22-23, Matthew 22:37-40, Colossians 3:17, Philippians 1:6, Philippians 2:12-13, Romans 8:29, 2 Corinthians 3:18*)
- j. **Angels, Satan, Demons.** God created a multitude of spiritual beings called "angels." Righteous angels continue to serve God and work both in the heavenly sphere and on earth. By his disobedience, Satan, a fallen angel, became the adversary of God and

God's people, carrying with him a procession of demons. Jesus Christ has overcome Satan so that the final judgment and doom of Satan and his demons are certain. (*Daniel 7:10, Hebrews 12:22, Hebrews 1:14, Ephesians 1:21, Ephesians 3:10, 1 Peter 5:8-9, Revelation 12:1-10, Ephesians 6:12, 1 John 3:8, John 12:31, Romans 16:20, Revelation 2:10*)

- k. **Future Life.** The dead will have a conscious existence in eternity and their bodies will be resurrected. Unbelievers, already under condemnation, will be sentenced to suffer eternal separation from God. Believers, already having been granted eternal life, will be judged and rewarded according to their works, and will experience a glorified, eternal existence in the presence of the Lord. (*Philippians 1:21-23, Luke 16:19-31, John 5:28-29, Matthew 25:46, Revelation 20:15, John 3:16, John 6:47, Romans 14:10-12, 1 Corinthians 3:10-15, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:17, Revelation 21:3-5, Psalm 16:11*)

### **Section 3 — Our Charis Identity: A Summary of Additional Commitments to Biblical Truth.**

- a. We seek to understand the intent of each biblical writer by using grammatical, historical and contextual principles of interpretation, focused on Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, and oriented by grace. We accept the absolute authority of the Bible rather than that of creeds, traditions, or leaders. (*Matthew 5:18, Luke 24:25-27, 1 Corinthians 2:14, 1 Corinthians 4:6*)
- b. We commit to an ongoing study, understanding and application of God's unchanging truth in our constantly changing world, whether personal, social or cultural. (*Acts 17:11, 2 Timothy 2:15, 1 Chronicles 12:32*)
- c. We affirm that true believers put their trust in Jesus Christ and are kept forever in the saving grace of God through His promises and His power. Every believer has been eternally justified, blessed with all spiritual blessings, and set free from all condemnation. (*John 10:28-29, 1 Peter 1:3-5, Romans 3:24, Romans 4:25, Ephesians 1:3, Romans 8:1*)
- d. We affirm that the Holy Spirit's works of baptizing, sealing and indwelling occur simultaneously with regeneration and are the possession of every true believer. The Holy Spirit gives each believer a unique combination of spiritual gifts for the purpose of serving God and people. (*1 Corinthians 12:13, Ephesians 1:13, Romans 8:11, Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:7-11*)
- e. We affirm that Jesus Christ gave ordinances to the church. Baptism testifies to the reality of our salvation and identifies us as disciples of the Triune God. We therefore encourage the practice of triune immersion. Communion testifies to our justification, sanctification and glorification, which are accomplished through Jesus Christ. We therefore encourage the practice of these symbols: the bread and cup, the washing of

feet and the sharing of a meal. (*Matthew 28:19, Acts 8:36-38, Acts 10:47, 1 Corinthians 11:20-26, Luke 22:14-20, John 13:14, Jude 12*)

- f. We encourage the practice of additional biblical symbolic actions, such as anointing with oil and prayer for the sick, laying on of hands for ministry, etc. (*James 5:13-16, 1 Timothy 4:14*)
- g. We affirm that the Church began on a particular day of Pentecost when our ascended Lord sent his Spirit to the waiting disciples. The present Church age will come to an end when our Lord comes in the air to remove His church from the earth and fulfill his promises to Israel. The second coming of Christ is the personal, physical and visible return from heaven of Christ to earth with His Church, to establish His thousand-year reign before instituting His eternal kingdom. (*Acts 2:1, Acts 2:37-47, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, John 14:3, Zechariah 12, Romans 11:26-29, Acts 1:11, Zechariah 14:4, Revelation 19:11-16, Colossians 3:4, Revelation 20:4, 1 Corinthians 15:24-25*)

#### **Section 4 — Our Charis Identity: A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Relationships**

- a. We affirm that the Triune God serves as the perfect and ultimate model for human relationships. As a result, each person has equal value yet different roles, which are expressed in loving unity. (*John 17:20-21, Ephesians 4:1-6*)
- b. We affirm that differences in gifts and ministries are a manifestation of the multifaceted grace of God. As a result, we encourage all believers to use their gifts in ways that promote the unity, growth and ministry of the local church. (*1 Peter 4:10, Romans 12:3-8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27*)
- c. We affirm our obligation to love and respect one another, and to practice the 'one another' exhortations. As a result, we commit to work together and to resolve our differences, for the good of individuals, churches and communities. (*The New Testament has over twenty 'one another' references; compare James 5:16, Galatians 5:13, etc.*)
- d. We affirm the responsibility of local churches to govern their own affairs while urging those churches to live and serve in community and interdependency with other churches. (*1 Corinthians 5:12-13, 1 Corinthians 11:16*)
- e. We affirm that the mandate and urgency to fulfill the Great Commission leads us to seek ways to cooperate with one another, and with likeminded Christians on the local, regional and global levels. (*Acts 18:24-28, Romans 15:24-29*)

## Section 5 — Our Charis Identity: A Summary of our Commitments to Biblical Mission

- a. We affirm that God’s plan for this age is best summarized in Jesus’ command to make disciples of all nations. This includes the evangelistic call to reconciliation with God by means of the completed work of Christ and the lifelong pursuit of obedience to God by means of the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit. *(Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 1:5, Romans 10:13-17, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Galatians 5:16)*
- b. We affirm that God’s plan for this age includes the recognition, training and releasing of spiritually qualified and appropriately trained leaders. While the specific gifts, abilities and responsibilities of leaders may vary, all leaders must serve as servants of God, shepherds of God’s people and stewards of God’s resources. *(Acts 13:2-3, 1 Timothy 4:6, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:2, 1 Corinthians 4:1)*
- c. We affirm that God’s plan for this age is most fully expressed through establishing healthy churches. Although practices may vary between cultures, healthy local churches are comprised of believers in Christ who assume a mutual commitment to worship, learning, service, prayer and witness. *(Acts 2:41-47, Acts 14:21-28)*
- d. We affirm that God’s plan for this age includes our responsibility to express the compassion of Christ through proclaiming the Gospel in words while loving in deeds. We are committed to finding creative and practical ways to address the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of a fallen humanity. *(1 John 3:16-18, Acts 10:38, Titus 3:8, James 2:1-9)*