

The Elders of Grace Covenant Church affirm the following for the Governance of the local body of Grace Covenant Church:

- All authority in heaven and earth belongs to Jesus Christ. He is the Head of His Church, and the church belongs to Him. Everything we do at Grace Covenant Church is under submission to the authority of Jesus Christ.
(Colossians 1:15-20; Matthew 28:18-20; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 1:1-4)
- As an independent Bible Church, we follow what we believe to be the New Testament instructions and model of appointing male leaders to serve as Elders of Grace Covenant Church. The Elders, as a group, are vested with delegated authority from the Lord for oversight of the flock and the affairs of our church.
(Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17-20; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- The Senior Pastor position is selected by the Elders. He is ordained* for a unique role of influence in our church, and therefore must meet the qualifications of and serve as an Elder, per the Constitution of Grace Covenant Church. The Senior Pastor has the primary responsibility of teaching in the pulpit.
(Hebrews 13:7; 1 Timothy 4:13-16, 5:17)
- The Elders believe the Lord has delegated at least five general aspects of church governance. The Board of Elders of Grace Covenant Church is the only group that is responsible before the Lord for all five, which are listed below. The Elders engage and delegate to others, such as pastors, deacons, ministry leaders, staff, and capable individuals, to take care of specific responsibilities/tasks of these five aspects of church governance.
(Hebrews 13:17; 2 Timothy 2:2)
 - **Oversight** – Oversight of Grace is a unique role that the Elders exercise. The Elders will stand before God and answer for the health and well-being of Grace Covenant Church. With their delegated authority from the Lord, the Elders set the overall direction, philosophy, doctrine, and strategic focus for the church. The following four aspects can be shared or delegated to pastors, staff or qualified lay leaders, but are still under the authority of the Elders.
(Acts 20:28)
 - **Shepherding the Flock** – This involves caring for and discipling the flock with the goal of encouraging the spiritual health and well-being of the congregation.
(1 Peter 5:1-5)
 - **Leadership** – This involves the leadership of ministries, worship, and programs to equip the saints for the work of service, and to engage them in building God’s kingdom.
(Ephesians 4:11-13)
 - **Teaching** – This involves the instruction of God’s Word to promote healthy spiritual development and obedience in every aspect of life.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17, 4:2-5; Titus 2)
 - **Administration** – This involves the wise stewardship of the resources, finances, facilities, and people that God has entrusted to us.
(Acts 6:1-7)

- In exercising oversight of the church, the Elders commission* other pastors, in addition to the Senior Pastor, to serve in shepherding the flock of Grace. Pastors serve under the authority of the Elders and have delegated responsibilities from the Elders. They serve by providing leadership of Grace's discipleship ministries, as well as teaching and instructing.
(Ephesians 4:11-13; 1 Timothy 2:11-14, 4:11-14)
- The Elders affirm the dignity of both men and women as fellow heirs of salvation and Jesus' eternal blessings. We believe that the Holy Spirit distributes the gifts of the Spirit without distinction for the building up of the body of Christ. Women and men both have vital roles in the well-being of the church and are encouraged to serve, lead in ministry and in the administration of Grace. Therefore, we affirm that men and women can serve at Grace as a commissioned pastor, deacon, ministry leader, teacher, administrator or in any other role and responsibility of the church the Elders choose to delegate.
(Rom 12:3-8; I Cor 12; Galatians 3:26-29; 1 Timothy 3:8-11)
- We affirm that one of the gifts the Holy Spirit has graciously distributed for the building up of the body of Grace is teaching. The content and delivery of all teaching and preaching at Grace in all forums fall under the oversight of the Elders for the building up of the body. All teaching is expected to align with the theological and doctrinal views of the church.
(Titus 2)

The affirmations of this document are for the governance of Grace Covenant Church alone. We recognize other independent churches and denominations will have the responsibility to define their governance and beliefs, according to their understanding of Scripture. As an independent Bible Church, Grace Covenant Church believes the Board of Elders is entrusted with the authority to decide what Scripture teaches on these topics, and how we will align to its instruction. We have prayerfully considered other possible positions and humbly adopt these beliefs regarding the governance and leadership of our church.

* Footnote: Ordination and commissioning of pastors

The IRS recognizes various categories of religious workers, including those licensed for ministry, commissioned, and ordained, but does not define the distinction between the categories. For our purposes at Grace, we use two categories: ordained and commissioned. Both recognize that the person has demonstrated the character and competencies for pastoral ministry in our congregation. We reserve ordination specifically for the Senior Pastor to affirm his unique role in leading the flock. All other pastors will be commissioned for pastoral ministry.