

1 BYLAWS  
2 GRAND AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH  
3 612 24<sup>th</sup> Street, Ames, Iowa 50010  
4 Approved May 22, 2022  
5

6 ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP  
7

8 Section 1 – Grand Avenue Baptist Church. Grand Avenue Baptist Church of Ames, Iowa  
9 (GABC) is a Christian church whose members profess repentance of their sins and belief  
10 in the Lord Jesus Christ, have affirmed this profession through baptism and evidence it in  
11 their lives, and agree to assemble regularly to live out their common faith. In sharing life  
12 together, members will join to hear God’s Word preached and taught, baptize believers,  
13 partake of the Lord’s Supper, sing praises to God, pray, spread and proclaim the Gospel,  
14 serve the community, encourage one another in mutual accountability, practice and  
15 submit to church discipline, and exercise the gifts of the Holy Spirit for the strengthening  
16 of Christ’s local church at GABC and His universal church.  
17

18 Section 2 – Eligibility and Admission to Membership. Upon completion of any membership  
19 training required by GABC and meeting with at least one elder, a person who meets the  
20 minimum requirements below may be recommended by the elders for membership with  
21 GABC:  
22

- 23 (1) Understands the Gospel – that God, who is holy and just, created Man in His own  
24 image; that Man, by nature and choice, rebels and sins against God and is  
25 therefore deserving of death as the just punishment for sinning against a perfectly  
26 holy God; that Jesus, God’s only Son, came in the flesh as a man, lived a perfectly  
27 holy life, and died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin; that God raised Jesus  
28 bodily from the dead; and that all those who repent of their sin and believe in Jesus  
29 as Lord and Savior are forgiven of their sin, reconciled to God, and granted eternal  
30 life;
- 31 (2) Appears to genuinely and credibly confess repentance from sin and belief in Jesus  
32 Christ as Lord and Savior;
- 33 (3) Has been baptized by immersion as a believer;
- 34 (4) Is in agreement with GABC’s statement of faith (the Baptist Faith and Message  
35 adopted by Southern Baptist Convention in 2000);
- 36 (5) Agrees to live according to the GABC Church Covenant;
- 37 (6) Agrees to be governed by GABC’s Bylaws;
- 38 (7) Is not under discipline in any other church unless, after examining the matter, the  
39 elders at GABC believe the other church’s discipline was unbiblical or otherwise  
40 improper; and
- 41 (8) Is not a member of (or will resign from membership in) any other church, unless a  
42 special exception is warranted and is recommended by the elders and approved  
43 by the church.  
44

45 A person recommended by the elders for membership is admitted to membership upon  
46 congregational approval by majority vote at a properly called members meeting.

47  
48 Section 3 – Expectations of Members. The Bible instructs Christians to be regularly and  
49 actively involved in local Christian churches. Expectations of GABC members are outlined  
50 in the Church Covenant and include, but are not limited to, the following (unless  
51 providentially hindered):

- 52 (1) Attend GABC regularly, Hebrews 10:25;
- 53 (2) Support and give regularly and cheerfully to GABC, 2 Cor. 8, 9; Psalm 24:1;  
54 Acts 4:32-37;
- 55 (3) Love and be committed to the entire body of Christian brothers and sisters at  
56 GABC, John 13:35; 1 Corinthians 3; James 2:1-9; 1 John 4:20;
- 57 (4) Participate in the Lord’s Supper at GABC, Acts 2:41-42; 1 Corinthians 11:23-  
58 26;
- 59 (5) Exercise gifts to build up the local body of Christ at GABC, 1 Corinthians 12:4-  
60 11, 14:12; Ephesians 4:12-13; and
- 61 (6) Devote time and effort to understand the Bible, fellowship with other members,  
62 and pray together and for each other, Acts 2:41-42.

63  
64 Section 4 – Termination of Membership. Membership may be terminated in one of three  
65 ways:

- 66 (1) Membership is automatically terminated by death.
- 67 (2) Membership may be terminated by voluntary resignation (including letters of  
68 transfer) which must be congregationally approved by an affirmative vote of  
69 two-thirds or more.
- 70 (3) Membership may be terminated for reasons of church discipline which must  
71 be congregationally approved by an affirmative vote of two-thirds or more.

72  
73 Section 5 – Process of Church Discipline. Matters of church discipline shall be handled in  
74 a manner consistent with Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Corinthians 5, 1 Timothy 5:19-20, and  
75 other relevant passages.

## 76 77 ARTICLE II – CHURCH DECISION-MAKING AND OFFICES

78  
79 Section 1 – Congregation. The final human authority under Christ over GABC rests with  
80 the congregation – not pastors, elders, deacons, a denomination, denominational  
81 leadership, or any other human authority. The Bible and these Bylaws specifically give  
82 the congregation as a whole final decision-making authority over doctrine, discipline,  
83 membership, disputes between members, and selection of leaders/representatives. See,  
84 e.g., Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 6:1-6, 11:22, 15:1-41; 1 Corinthians 1:2, 5:1-13, 6:1-8, 16:1-  
85 4; 2 Corinthians 2:6-10; Galatians 1:2, 6-9; 1 Timothy 3:15; and 2 Timothy 4:2-4. These  
86 Bylaws also set forth other specific decisions that GABC has determined shall be made  
87 by the congregation as a whole. All other decisions not specifically reserved to the  
88 congregation in the Bible or these Bylaws may be made by the elders if not otherwise  
89 delegated by these Bylaws to a deacon, administrator, or other church representative.  
90 The congregation has a responsibility to provide helpful information and insight to its  
91 elders as they take or recommend actions, and to appropriately obey and submit to its  
92 leaders. See Hebrews 13:17. The elders have a responsibility to keep the congregation

93 informed about significant matters under consideration and, when possible and  
94 appropriate, to seek input and recommendations from the congregation on such matters.

95  
96 Section 2 – Elders.

97  
98 (1) Definition and Number. The Bible uses the terms elders, overseers, and pastors  
99 interchangeably to refer to the same local church office. See, e.g., Acts 20:17-28.  
100 These Bylaws will refer to those who fill the office as elders. The New Testament  
101 regularly refers to elders in the plural. See, for example, Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23,  
102 20:17; and James 5:14. Although a precise number of elders for a local church is  
103 nowhere mandated in Scripture. GABC shall have, whenever possible, at least  
104 three elders meeting the necessary qualifications and may have as many  
105 additional elders as are necessary, consistent with the size and spiritual needs of  
106 the church. GABC shall have, whenever possible, an equal or greater number of  
107 elders who are not employed by the church as elders who are employed by the  
108 church (staff elders).

109  
110 (2) Responsibilities. The elder board at GABC are responsible for leading and  
111 directing the spiritual and practical affairs of the church, subject always and as  
112 appropriate to the authority of the congregation as a whole. Such responsibilities  
113 include, but are not limited to, exercising spiritual oversight over and shepherding  
114 the congregation, keeping watch over the souls of members, preaching and  
115 teaching and otherwise giving instruction in sound doctrine, rebuking those who  
116 contradict God’s Word, protecting the church and its members from spiritual attack  
117 and from twisted speech (untruthful, contrary to Gospel or Scripture), being God’s  
118 steward (including over financial and supervisory matters), being an example to  
119 the church, helping the spiritually weak, praying for the sick, being hospitable,  
120 admonishing the congregation and individual members when and where  
121 necessary by staying alert, and making decisions and caring for the entire  
122 congregation and otherwise managing the household of God. See, e.g., Acts 16:4,  
123 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:7-9; Hebrews 13:7; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:4.  
124 In exercising spiritual oversight over the congregation, the elders shall regularly  
125 review the membership rolls of GABC, and shall oversee the work of the Deacons  
126 (Section 3 below) and any administrators and representatives (Section 4 below).

127  
128 (3) Minimum Qualifications. Minimum elder qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3:2-  
129 7 and Titus 1:6-9. In accordance with Scripture, the office of elder is open to  
130 qualified men.

131  
132 Section 3 – Deacons.

133  
134 (1) Definition and Number. The word for deacon in the Bible, “*diakonos*,” means  
135 servant or minister. As demonstrated in Acts 6:1-6, deacons serve several  
136 purposes: (a) to fulfill particular physical needs of the church by ensuring wise use  
137 of available ministry resources (though not deciding the overall allocation of church  
138 resources); (b) to promote unity within the church by serving impartially; and (c) to

139 support the ministry of the Word by freeing up others for preaching, teaching, and  
140 prayer. Deacons do not share the same responsibilities as elders or function as a  
141 separate deliberative body within the church competing with the elders over  
142 decisions.

143  
144 There is no limit to the number of deacons that may be appointed by the church  
145 so long as each meets the minimum qualifications set out below and each fills an  
146 ongoing and significant particular ministry or service need of the church. However,  
147 many ministry and service needs of the church can and should be handled by non-  
148 deacon member volunteers and therefore the number of deacons should be limited  
149 and generally proportionate to the size and activity of the church.

150  
151 (2) Responsibilities. Deacons are responsible for carrying out the particular ministry  
152 or service to which they have been assigned by wisely administrating the relevant  
153 allocated budget, recruiting and organizing and training sufficient volunteer  
154 members to carry out the particular ministry and service activities, following  
155 applicable church policies and procedures, requesting guidance from elders as  
156 necessary for situations not covered by existing church policies, recommending  
157 updates and revisions to existing church policies, and providing updates and  
158 reports to the elders and congregation as requested.

159  
160 (3) Minimum Qualifications. Minimum deacon qualifications are found in 1 Timothy  
161 3:8-13. The example of Acts 6:1-6 provides additional qualities to look for in  
162 deacons. The office of deacon is open to qualified men and women.

163  
164 Section 4 – Administrators and Representatives.

165  
166 (1) Messengers. Messengers (or delegates or representatives) shall be chosen by the  
167 elders as necessary to represent GABC at local, associational, state, regional,  
168 national, and/or worldwide meetings in which GABC chooses to participate. Elders  
169 may serve as messengers to all such meetings in which they are willing and able  
170 to attend without needing to be approved by the congregation.

171  
172 (2) Corporate Directors. See Article VII of these Bylaws.

173  
174 (3) Committees. The elders shall establish a search committee for any paid (staff)  
175 elder position opening. Such search committees shall include an equal or greater  
176 number of non-elder members as elders, and all committee members shall be  
177 approved by the church. Any such search committee shall regularly inform the  
178 congregation of the nature of its progress and shall report any final hiring  
179 recommendations to the elders.

180  
181 If needed, the elders may establish other committees of members to assist them  
182 in fulfilling their responsibilities. Such committees may be established without  
183 obtaining the approval of the congregation.

184

185 Section 5 – General. All elders, deacons, administrators, and church representatives  
186 listed in Sections 2-4 of Article II must be members in good standing of GABC.

187  
188 ARTICLE III – ELECTIONS AND APPROVALS

189  
190 Section 1 – Congregational Decisions. All decisions made by the congregation as a whole  
191 shall be on the basis of a majority of votes cast by eligible members present at an official  
192 members’ meeting (see Article V, Sections 2 and 4) unless otherwise indicated in the  
193 Bylaws. A quorum shall be necessary for any votes to take place. A quorum shall consist  
194 of at least thirty percent of the eligible voting members of the church. Members in good  
195 standing and aged sixteen and above are eligible to vote at any members’ meeting. A  
196 ninety percent vote of the eligible members present and voting is required at any  
197 members’ meeting to suspend the Bylaws for any reason.

198  
199 Section 2 – Specific Matters Requiring Congregational Approval. The following matters,  
200 in addition to those otherwise set out in these Bylaws, must be approved by the  
201 congregation:

- 202
- 203 (1) The elders shall propose, and the congregation must approve, an annual  
204 budget for total expenditures and for general categories of expenditures, and  
205 any increases during the course of the year to such budget.  
206
  - 207 (2) The congregation need not approve annual budgets for subcategories of  
208 expenses under any general budget category, nor any changes to such  
209 subcategories within a general budget category during the year. The elders  
210 can make these types of changes at any time without obtaining congregational  
211 approval. However, the congregation shall be notified of any such changes to  
212 budget subcategories at the next members’ meeting.  
213
  - 214 (3) Notwithstanding Section 2(2) of Article III of these Bylaws, the congregation  
215 must approve, after an affirmative recommendation of the elders, any off-  
216 budget expenditure greater than \$5000 or 5% of the line item (whichever is  
217 higher) including those paid from designated funds or those paid from  
218 reallocations of budget subcategories.  
219
  - 220 (4) Church policies (such as use of the church building and property, nursery  
221 procedures, financial processes, etc.) shall be approved by the elders and  
222 need not be approved by the congregation as a whole. However, the  
223 congregation should be notified of official written standing policies and should,  
224 whenever possible, be given an opportunity to provide input on them.  
225

226 Section 3 – Selection of Elders. All elders must be nominated by the elders and  
227 congregationally approved by at least a two-thirds vote. Members are encouraged to  
228 recommend to the elders qualified candidates to serve as elders. An elder serves a three-  
229 year term from the date of election and may be re-nominated and approved for a  
230 successive three-year term. There is no limit to the number of successive terms an elder

231 may serve, provided that he takes breaks as prescribed below.

232  
233 To encourage rest and well-being, an elder serving successive terms must take a one-  
234 year break from active service on the board per two-term (six year) period. He may take  
235 this in increments of no less than six months. The scheduling of this time off shall be  
236 determined by the elder in conjunction with the board. During such break, he will not  
237 attend elder meetings or participate in elder discussions, emails, or exercise elder care in  
238 the congregation. The congregation will be made aware of this time off the board.

239  
240 Staff elders are not limited to any particular term of service and are not required to take  
241 any time off from service as an elder.

242  
243 Section 4 – Selection of Deacons. All deacons must be nominated by the elders and  
244 congregationally approved by majority vote. Members are encouraged to recommend to  
245 the elders qualified candidates to serve as deacons. A deacon shall be nominated and  
246 approved for a particular service or ministry, the duties of which are set forth briefly in  
247 writing. A deacon serves a two-year term from the date of election. A deacon may be  
248 nominated and approved for a successive two-year term. After three successive terms  
249 (or six years of successive service in the same deacon position), a deacon must take at  
250 least one year off from serving as a deacon in that particular service or ministry before  
251 being nominated and approved again for the same service. Deacon position vacancies  
252 can be filled at any time and do not need to be filled if the service or ministry is no longer  
253 needed.

254  
255 Section 5 – Selection of Representatives. All church representatives (other than elders  
256 and deacons as set forth above) shall be nominated by the elders and congregationally  
257 approved by majority vote. The terms of service shall be set forth as part of the motion  
258 approving such administrators or representatives. There are no restrictions on being  
259 nominated and approved for successive terms of service to any of these positions, except  
260 that all persons who have served in the same position for six consecutive years must take  
261 one year off before serving in the position again.

262  
263 Section 6 – General. Nominations for elders and deacons may not be voted upon at the  
264 time of the nomination and must hold over for a vote until the next members' meeting.  
265 Any member with reason to believe that a nominated individual is unqualified for an office  
266 should express such concern to the elders.

267  
268 ARTICLE IV – CHURCH EMPLOYEES

269  
270 Section 1 – Paid Ministry Staff.

271  
272 The elders shall recommend, and the congregation must approve, the creation of any full-  
273 time paid ministry staff positions including a brief description of the duties of such position  
274 and whether the person filling such position will continuously serve as an elder. Prior to  
275 filling any such positions, the congregation must approve sufficient funds for such  
276 positions as part of the annual budget or as a specific change to the current budget. If the

277 person filling the position will serve as a staff elder or deacon, the person must be  
278 nominated and approved in the manner set forth for elders in Article III, Section 3. If the  
279 person filling the position will not serve as a staff elder, then the person shall be nominated  
280 by the elders and approved by majority vote of the congregation consistent with the  
281 provisions of Article III, Section 5 (except for the five-year term limitation). The person  
282 would thereafter be eligible to serve as a term elder if nominated and approved as set  
283 forth in Article III, Section 3.

284  
285 All paid ministry staff shall be supervised by the elders who shall determine the specific  
286 responsibilities, hours, vacation, compensation and benefits (neither to exceed that  
287 authorized by the congregation), evaluation, and (if necessary) recommendation to  
288 terminate. The elders may delegate direct supervisory responsibilities over particular staff  
289 members to a single elder, group of elders, or deacon. An elder who also serves as paid  
290 ministry staff shall have no vote within the elders in determining his own compensation,  
291 benefits, hours, vacation, and evaluation, but he is allowed to vote on such matters to the  
292 extent such decisions are made by the congregation as a whole (e.g., compensation as  
293 part of budget approval).

294  
295 Section 2 – Paid Administrative Staff.

296  
297 The elders shall recommend, and the congregation must approve, the creation of any full-  
298 time paid administrative staff positions including a brief description of the duties of such  
299 position. Prior to filling any such positions, the congregation must approve sufficient funds  
300 for such positions as part of the annual budget or as a specific change to the current  
301 budget. The elders shall be authorized to fill any such funded positions without the need  
302 for congregational approval but shall timely notify the congregation of the person selected.

303  
304 All paid administrative staff shall be supervised by the elders who shall determine the  
305 specific responsibilities, hours, vacation, compensation and benefits (neither to exceed  
306 that authorized by the congregation), evaluation, and (if necessary) decision to terminate.  
307 The elders may delegate direct supervisory responsibilities over particular administrative  
308 staff members to a single elder, group of elders, or deacon.

309  
310 Section 3 – Service Providers and Contractors.

311  
312 Elders are authorized to negotiate and hire service providers and contractors to perform  
313 services to or for GABC as long as sufficient funds have been authorized by the  
314 congregation for such contract or services as part of a general expense category within  
315 the church's budget or as a special approved expense. Deacons, within their assigned  
316 service area of responsibility, are likewise authorized to negotiate and hire service  
317 providers and contractors to perform services to or for GABC as long as sufficient funds  
318 have been authorized within the budget.

319  
320 ARTICLE V – MEETINGS AND RULES OF ORDER

321  
322 Section 1 – The Church shall meet regularly on Sundays for corporate worship at times

323 appointed by the elders.

324

325 Section 2 – Members shall meet regularly to conduct the affairs of GABC. The elders shall  
326 determine specific dates, times, and whether special circumstances exist to cancel such  
327 meetings, but in no event shall regular or special members’ meetings be held during the  
328 regularly scheduled times for Sunday morning worship and education.

329

330 Section 3 – A moderator selected by the elders shall preside over members’ meetings.  
331 The moderator shall see that meetings are conducted in a manner that is ordered, fair,  
332 peaceable, and consistent with the convictions of the church. The moderator shall be the  
333 final authority on all procedural matters.

334

335 Section 4 – Special members’ meetings shall be called by the elders whenever the elders  
336 receive a written request for such a meeting by at least ten members or ten percent of the  
337 membership, whichever is greater, for the same general matter. Notice of the time, place,  
338 and specific issues to be decided for any special members’ meeting must be publicly  
339 announced one week (whenever possible) beforehand during the Sunday morning  
340 service and by email and posted in writing at church. All special members’ meetings must  
341 be announced during the Sunday morning worship service immediately prior to the  
342 meeting. No motions can be acted upon at any special members’ meeting unless they  
343 have been posted in writing prior to the meeting in the same manner as set forth above  
344 in the requirements for noticing such meetings.

345

346 Section 5 – Any authority to alienate, buy, sell, or encumber the real property, main  
347 structure, or any personal property of the church worth more than \$10,000 (including  
348 vehicles) shall be valid only when congregationally approved by an affirmative vote of  
349 two-thirds or more.

350

## 351 ARTICLE VI – GENERAL PROVISIONS

352

353 Section 1 – GABC shall maintain cooperation with the Southern Baptist Convention and  
354 the Baptist Convention of Iowa. As an autonomous church cooperating with these bodies,  
355 GABC may support their programs or use their materials if they are in accord with the  
356 Bible and otherwise deemed appropriate.

357

358 Section 2 – Any monetary income received by the church, whether by regular donations,  
359 by will, by beneficiary, by policy of insurance, or any other way shall go into the general  
360 fund unless designated otherwise in writing by the donor or testator. While respecting the  
361 request of the donor or testator, decisions regarding whether to receive funds for  
362 designated purposes or to create a designated account shall ultimately be made by GABC  
363 or its officers in accordance with church policies. The congregation shall be notified of the  
364 creation of any new designated fund, and shall be required to approve the creation of any  
365 designated fund that will expend an amount greater than \$20,000.

366

## 367 ARTICLE VII – CORPORATE DIRECTORS

368

369 Section 1 – The actively serving elders shall constitute the corporate board of directors of  
370 GABC.

371  
372 Section 2 – Corporate directors are the only persons authorized by the church to enter  
373 into written legal contracts, to buy and sell real estate, to open and close bank accounts,  
374 to sign papers obligating the church to mortgages or other loans, and to sign tax reports.  
375 The corporate directors may act in these matters only as agents of the church under the  
376 authority and at the instruction of the church. Actions to be taken by the corporate  
377 directors that do not require specific congregational approval in these Bylaws may be  
378 authorized by the directors (e.g., filing tax reports and changing bank accounts). Except  
379 for signing tax reports and entering into written legal contracts, signatures of at least two-  
380 thirds of the directors are required for all such transactions. The corporate directors shall  
381 approve the list of financial responsibilities and those who are assigned these tasks in the  
382 church's policy and procedures manual.

383  
384 Section 3 – The corporate directors shall be responsible for maintaining and filing all  
385 necessary corporate paperwork.

386  
387 ARTICLE VIII – INDEMNIFICATION PROVISIONS

388  
389 Section 1 – Insurance.

390  
391 GABC will purchase and maintain liability insurance on behalf of any and all persons who  
392 are or were a director, officer, leader, employee, committee member or volunteer of  
393 GABC (while serving in their capacity as such). Such insurance will be purchased for the  
394 purpose of protecting such persons from covered loss resulting in liability asserted against  
395 the above individuals in connection with their activities on behalf of GABC.

396  
397 Section 2 – Indemnification Requests.

398  
399 Should any director, officer, leader, employee, committee member or volunteer of GABC  
400 incur any liability as a result of their affiliation with or service to GABC that is not covered  
401 by GABC's insurance policy, and should such liability result in any out-of-pocket cost to  
402 such individual, then such individual may request indemnification from GABC. The  
403 granting of full or partial indemnification shall be at the discretion of the elders of GABC  
404 as set forth in Section 3 herein.

405  
406 Section 3 – Indemnification Decisions.

407  
408 In relation to any indemnification request that is made pursuant to Section 2 herein, if  
409 such request is made by an individual who is not currently serving on the elder board of  
410 GABC, then the indemnification decision (whether to indemnify the requesting individual,  
411 and the dollar amount of such indemnification), will be made by the elders. Such decisions  
412 of the elder board will be final. If the indemnification request is being made by a person  
413 who is currently serving on the governing board, then the indemnification decision  
414 (whether to indemnify the requesting party, and the dollar amount of such

415 indemnification), will be made by the remaining disinterested members of the governing  
416 board. A decision on the indemnification request by a majority of disinterested members  
417 of the elders will be final.

418  
419 ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

420  
421 These Bylaws may be amended by an affirmative vote of two-thirds or greater of the  
422 eligible members present at any regular members’ meeting or special members’ meeting  
423 called for that purpose provided proper notice has been given as set out in the Bylaws.

424  
425 ARTICLE X – RESCISSION

426  
427 These Bylaws shall become effective May 22, 2022, after adoption by the church and  
428 shall supersede any conflicting policies, procedures, or decisions which may have been  
429 made and adopted by GABC as recorded in its minutes.

430  
431 APPENDICES (available at <http://gabcomes.org/about-us/history-vision-and-values/>)

- 432  
433 (1) Baptist Faith and Message Statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention  
434 in 2000  
435  
436 (2) GABC Church Covenant  
437  
438 (3) Church Polity Principles