

BYLAWS
GRAND AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH
612 24th Street, Ames, Iowa 50010
Approved February 1, 2026

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

A person recommended by the elders for membership is admitted to membership upon

congregational approval by majority vote at a properly called members meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

ARTICLE II – CHURCH DECISION-MAKING AND OFFICES

Section 1 – Congregation. The final human authority under Christ over GABC rests with the congregation – not pastors, elders, deacons, a denomination, denominational leadership, or any other human authority. The Bible and these Bylaws specifically give the congregation as a whole final decision-making authority over doctrine, discipline, membership, disputes between members, and selection of leaders/representatives. See, 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, 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 2:6-10; Galatians 1:2, 6-9; 1 Timothy 3:15; and 2 Timothy 4:2-4. These Bylaws also set forth other specific decisions that GABC has determined shall be made by the congregation as a whole. All other decisions not specifically reserved to the congregation in the Bible or these Bylaws may be made by the elders if not otherwise delegated by these Bylaws to a deacon, administrator, or other church representative. The congregation has a responsibility to provide helpful information and insight to its elders as they take or recommend actions, and to appropriately obey and

submit to its leaders. See Hebrews 13:17. The elders have a responsibility to keep the congregation informed about significant matters under consideration and, when possible and appropriate, to seek input and recommendations from the congregation on such matters.

Section 2 – Elders.

- (1) Definition and Number. The Bible uses the terms elders, overseers, and pastors interchangeably to refer to the same local church office. See, e.g., Acts 20:17-28. These Bylaws will refer to those who fill the office as elders. The New Testament regularly refers to elders in the plural. See, for example, Titus 1:5; Acts 14:23, 20:17; and James 5:14. Although a precise number of elders for a local church is nowhere mandated in Scripture. GABC shall have, whenever possible, at least three elders meeting the necessary qualifications and may have as many additional elders as are necessary, consistent with the size and spiritual needs of the church. GABC shall have, whenever possible, an equal or greater number of elders who are not employed by the church as elders who are employed by the church (staff elders).
- (2) Responsibilities. The elder board at GABC are responsible for leading and directing the spiritual and practical affairs of the church, subject always and as appropriate to the authority of the congregation as a whole. Such responsibilities include, but are not limited to, exercising spiritual oversight over and shepherding the congregation, keeping watch over the souls of members, preaching and teaching and otherwise giving instruction in sound doctrine, rebuking those who contradict God's Word, protecting the church and its members from spiritual attack and from twisted speech (untruthful, contrary to Gospel or Scripture), being God's steward (including over financial and supervisory matters), being an example to the church, helping the spiritually weak, praying for the sick, being hospitable, admonishing the congregation and individual members when and where necessary by staying alert, and making decisions and caring for the entire congregation and otherwise managing the household of God. See, e.g., Acts 16:4, 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 5:17; Titus 1:7-9; Hebrews 13:7; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:4. In exercising spiritual oversight over the congregation, the elders shall regularly review the membership rolls of GABC, and shall oversee the work of the Deacons (Section 3 below) and any administrators and representatives (Section 4 below).
- (3) Minimum Qualifications. Minimum elder qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9. In accordance with Scripture, the office of elder is open to qualified men.

Section 3 – Deacons.

- (1) Definition and Number. The word for deacon in the Bible, "*diakonos*," means servant or minister. As demonstrated in Acts 6:1-6, deacons serve several

purposes: (a) to fulfill particular physical needs of the church by ensuring wise use of available ministry resources (though not deciding the overall allocation of church resources); (b) to promote unity within the church by serving impartially; and (c) to support the ministry of the Word by freeing up others for preaching, teaching, and prayer. Deacons do not share the same responsibilities as elders or function as a separate deliberative body within the church competing with the elders over decisions.

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

- (2) **Responsibilities**. Deacons are responsible for carrying out the particular ministry or service to which they have been assigned by wisely administrating the relevant allocated budget, recruiting and organizing and training sufficient volunteer members to carry out the particular ministry and service activities, following applicable church policies and procedures, requesting guidance from elders as necessary for situations not covered by existing church policies, recommending updates and revisions to existing church policies, and providing updates and reports to the elders and congregation as requested.
- (3) **Minimum Qualifications**. Minimum deacon qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The example of Acts 6:1-6 provides additional qualities to look for in deacons. The office of deacon is open to qualified men and women.

Section 4 – Administrators and Representatives.

- (1) **Messengers**. Messengers (or delegates or representatives) shall be chosen by the elders as necessary to represent GABC at local, associational, state, regional, national, and/or worldwide meetings in which GABC chooses to participate. Elders may serve as messengers to all such meetings in which they are willing and able to attend without needing to be approved by the congregation.
- (2) **Corporate Directors**. See Article VII of these Bylaws.
- (3) **Committees**. The elders shall establish a search committee for any paid (staff) elder position opening. Such search committees shall include an equal or greater number of non-elder members as elders, and all committee members shall be approved by the church. Any such search committee shall regularly inform the congregation of the nature of its progress and shall report any final hiring recommendations to the elders.

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

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

ARTICLE III – ELECTIONS AND APPROVALS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Section 4 – Selection of Deacons. All deacons must be nominated by the elders and congregationally approved by majority vote. Members are encouraged to recommend to the elders qualified candidates to serve as deacons. A deacon shall be nominated and approved for a particular service or ministry, the duties of which are set forth briefly in writing. A deacon serves a two-year term from the date of election. A deacon may be nominated and approved for successive two-year terms. Deacon position vacancies can be filled at any time and do not need to be filled if the service or ministry is no longer needed.

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

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

ARTICLE IV – CHURCH EMPLOYEES

Section 1 – Paid Ministry Staff

The elders shall recommend, and the congregation must approve, the creation of any full-time paid ministry staff positions including a brief description of the duties of such position and whether the person filling such position will continuously serve as an elder.

Prior to filling any such positions, the congregation must approve sufficient funds for such positions as part of the annual budget or as a specific change to the current budget. If the person filling the position will serve as a staff elder or deacon, the person must be nominated and approved in the manner set forth for elders in Article III, Section 3. If the person filling the position will not serve as a staff elder, then the person shall be nominated by the elders and approved by majority vote of the congregation consistent with the provisions of Article III, Section 5 (except for the term limitation). The person would thereafter be eligible to serve as a term elder if nominated and approved as set forth in Article III, Section 3.

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

Section 2 – Paid Administrative Staff.

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

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

Section 3 – Service Providers and Contractors.

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

ARTICLE V – MEETINGS AND RULES OF ORDER

Section 1 – The Church shall meet regularly on Sundays for corporate worship at times appointed by the elders.

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

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

Section 4 – Special members' meetings shall be called by the elders whenever the elders receive a written request for such a meeting by at least ten members or ten percent of the membership, whichever is greater, for the same general matter. Notice of the time, place, and specific issues to be decided for any special members' meeting must be publicly announced one week (whenever possible) beforehand during the Sunday morning service and by email. All special members' meetings must be announced during the Sunday morning worship service immediately prior to the meeting. No motions can be acted upon at any special members' meeting unless proper notice has been given prior to the meeting in the same manner as set forth above in the requirements for noticing such meetings.

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

ARTICLE VI – GENERAL PROVISIONS

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

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

\$20,000.

ARTICLE VII – CORPORATE DIRECTORS

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

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

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

ARTICLE VIII – INDEMNIFICATION PROVISIONS

Section 1 – Insurance.

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

Section 2 – Indemnification Requests.

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

Section 3 – Indemnification Decisions.

In relation to any indemnification request that is made pursuant to Section 2 herein, if such request is made by an individual who is not currently serving on the elder board of GABC, then the indemnification decision (whether to indemnify the requesting

individual, and the dollar amount of such indemnification), will be made by the elders. Such decisions of the elder board will be final. If the indemnification request is being made by a person who is currently serving on the governing board, then the indemnification decision (whether to indemnify the requesting party, and the dollar amount of such indemnification), will be made by the remaining disinterested members of the governing board. A decision on the indemnification request by a majority of disinterested members of the elders will be final.

ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

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

ARTICLE X – RESCISSION

These Bylaws shall become effective April 26, 2026, after adoption by the church and shall supersede any conflicting policies, procedures, or decisions which may have been made and adopted by GABC as recorded in its minutes.

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

- (1) Baptist Faith and Message Statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000
- (2) GABC Church Covenant
- (3) Church Polity Principles