

**Constitution for  
The Lehigh Valley Grace Brethren Church**  
580 Bridle Path Rd.,  
Bethlehem, PA 18017  
September 17, 2006

**Article I. NAME:**

“Lehigh Valley Grace Brethren Church”, hereafter referred to as LVGBC.

**Article II. PURPOSE:**

LVGBC exists to:

- Love God by obeying His Word and,
- Love people by reaching out to the lost and building up the believer.

**Article III. COVENANT:**

The covenant by which this local church exists as a distinct body, and which every member accepts, is as follows:

Acknowledging Jesus Christ to be our Savior and Lord, and submitting to the authority of the Holy Scriptures as our rule of faith and practice, and recognizing the privilege and duty of uniting ourselves for Christian fellowship, the enjoyment of Christian ordinances, the public worship of God, and the advancement of his church on earth, we do now, in the sight of God and invoking His blessing, solemnly covenant and agree with each other to associate ourselves as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, in obedience to the Word of God.

We agree to maintain the teaching and the preaching of the Word of God, to submit ourselves to the orderly administration of the affairs of the church and to walk together in brotherly love.

This we do depending on the aid of our Heavenly Father, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for our salvation, and Jesus Christ who redeemed us with His blood, and of the Holy Spirit, our Comforter and Guide.

**Article IV: STATEMENT OF BELIEFS AND PRACTICES:**

**Section 1:**

LVGBC, in keeping with the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (hereafter FGBC), maintains a commitment to a basic body of beliefs founded on God’s revealed truth, namely the Holy Scriptures. Accordingly, LVGBC proclaims the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible to be the infallible rule of faith and of practice as guided by the Holy Spirit. LVGBC will remain in doctrinal agreement with the FGBC by adopting the Statement of Faith. The Statement of Faith represents our current expression of a never-ending effort to clarify the primary doctrines of Christian faith.

## FGBC STATEMENT OF FAITH

1. THE BIBLE: The Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament, verbally inspired in all parts, and therefore wholly without error as originally given of God (*II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:21*).
2. THE ONE TRUE GOD: Existing eternally as three persons - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (*Luke 3:22; Matthew 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14*).
3. THE LORD JESUS CHRIST: His preexistence and deity (*John 1:1-3*), incarnation by virgin birth (*John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-23*), sinless life (*Hebrews 4:15*), substitutionary death (*II Corinthians 5:21*), bodily resurrection (*Luke 24:36-43*), ascension into heaven and present ministry (*Hebrews 4:14-16*), and coming again (*Acts 1:11*).
4. THE HOLY SPIRIT: His personality (*John 16:7-15*), and deity (*Acts 5:3, 4*) and His work in each believer: baptism and indwelling at the moment of regeneration (*I Corinthians 12:13; Romans 8:9*), and filling (*Ephesians 5:18*), to empower for Christian life and service (*Ephesians 3:16; Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:22, 23*).
5. MAN: His direct creation in the image of God (*Genesis 1:26-28*), his subsequent fall into sin resulting in spiritual death (*Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 5:12*), and the necessity of the new birth for his salvation (*John 3:3-5*).
6. SALVATION: A complete and eternal salvation by God's grace alone, received as the gift of God through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work (*Ephesians 2:8, 9; Titus 3:5-7; I Peter 1:18, 19*).
7. THE CHURCH: One true church, the body and bride of Christ (*Ephesians 1:22, 23; 5:25-32*), composed of all true believers of the present age (*I Corinthians 12:12, 13*), and the organization of its members in local churches for worship, for edification of believers, and for worldwide gospel witness, each local church being autonomous but cooperating in the fellowship and work (*Ephesians 4:11-16*).
8. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE: A life of righteousness, good works, and separation unto God from the evil ways of the world (*Romans 12:1,2*), manifested by speaking the truth (*James 5:12*), maintaining the sanctity of the home (*Ephesians 5:22-6:4*), settling differences between Christians in accordance with the Word of God (*I Corinthians 6:1-8*), not engaging in carnal strife but showing a Christ-like attitude toward all men (*Romans 12:17-21*), exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit (*Galatians 5:22,23*), and maintaining a life of prayer (*Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6*), including the privilege when sick, of calling for the elders of the church to pray and to anoint with oil in the name of the Lord (*James 5:13-18*).

9. THE ORDINANCES: The Christian should observe the ordinances of our Lord Jesus Christ, which are (1) baptism of believers by triune immersion (*Matthew 28:19*), and (2) the Thee Fold Communion Service, consisting of the washing of the saints feet (*John 13:1-17*), the Lord's Supper (*I Corinthians 11:20-22,23,34*; and *Jude 12*), and the communion of the bread and the cup (*I Corinthians 11:23-26*).

10. SATAN: His existence and personality as the great adversary of God and His people (*Revelation 12:1-10*), His judgment (*John 12:31*), and final doom (*Revelation 20:10*).

11. THE SECOND COMING: The personal, visible, and imminent return of Christ to remove His church from the earth (*I Thessalonians 4:16, 17*), before the tribulation (*I Thessalonians 1:10*; *Revelation 3:10*), and afterward He will descend with the church to establish His millennial kingdom upon the earth (*Revelation 19:11-20:6*).

12. THE FUTURE LIFE: The conscious existence of the dead (*Philippians 1:21-23*; *Luke 16:19-31*), the resurrection of the body (*John 5:28, 29*), the judgment and reward of believers (*Romans 14:10-12*; *II Corinthians 5:10*), the judgment and condemnation of unbelievers (*Revelation 20:11-15*), the eternal punishment of the lost (*Matthew 25:46*; *Revelation 20:15*).

#### **Section 2:**

Continuing Resolutions describing Biblical beliefs and practices may be presented from the Elders for approval by the membership. A two-thirds vote of all members present and eligible to vote will be required for the adoption. Current resolutions will be printed with this Constitution and Manual of Procedure.

#### **Article V: CHARTER:**

##### **Section 1- Authority**

- A. The primary authority, by which this church exists as an ecclesiastical body, is received from God through the Holy Scriptures. LVGBC recognizes and sustains the obligation of mutual counsel and cooperation, which is common among Grace Brethren Churches.
- B. The secondary authority is by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, under which it is incorporated.

##### **Section 2: Property**

- A. The property of this Corporation shall be vested in the corporate membership.
- B. All the property and assets owned by this Corporation shall be dedicated to religious and educational purposes. Upon dissolution, such assets will not benefit any individual member, but will be distributed in a manner consistent with its Articles of Incorporation by the then-standing Elder Board, or if necessary with the assistance of the Northern Atlantic Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches.

## **Article VI. MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section 1: Qualifications:**

- A. Any person may formally become a member of LVGBC, who has publicly acknowledged Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior, has experienced believer's baptism, and who has agreed to follow this Constitution, Manual of Procedures and Continuing Resolutions.
- B. While LVGBC accepts and affirms an individual's previous believer's baptism as a testimony of their faith, we earnestly desire all believers to experience triune immersion and to understand its symbolism and teaching in the Scriptures. We, as do all congregations in the FGBC, only perform baptism by triune immersion.

### **Section 2: Privileges and Responsibilities**

- A. LVGBC members are committed to personal spiritual growth, as exemplified by repenting from sin and pursuing righteousness. Members are also committed to individual and corporate prayer, meditation on Scripture, regular participation in worship and ordinances, mutual encouragement of one another, and using their spiritual gifts for the glory of God and building up the Body of Christ.
- B. LVGBC members are committed to contributing time, talent, and finances, cheerfully and voluntarily to the ministries of and ministries supported by the church body.
- C. LVGBC members are committed to participating in Congregational meetings helping to shape the direction and ministries of the church, with voting privileges granted to members 16 years or older.
- D. When troubles and disagreements arise, LVGBC members are committed to addressing issues Biblically, seeking prayerful, gentle resolution of conflicts, and restoration of relationships.

### **Section 3: Withdrawal**

A member's name may be removed from the roll upon request of that member.

### **Section 4: Discipline/Dismissal**

If a member fails to take seriously the privileges and responsibilities described in Article VI, section 2, other members and leaders will do all that is possible to bring resolution and restoration. If due prayer and effort do not prevail to bring results, the member may be removed from membership by a 2/3 vote of the members present a congregational meeting. (*Matthew 18:15-17, Titus 3:10, I Corinthians 5:1-13*).

## **Article VII. Government**

A congregational form of government exists. It expresses itself through pastors, elders and deacons who are held accountable by the church for their service.

### **Section 1: The Congregation**

An annual and semi-annual congregational meeting will be held on dates set by the Elder Board and Sr. Pastor to discuss and make decisions on the ministry of the church. Special congregational meetings may be called by the Sr. Pastor. The Recording Secretary must call a Congregational meeting in response to a written request stating the purpose of the meeting. The request must be supported by ten percent (10%) of the voting membership.

## **Section 2: Sr. Pastor**

- A. In addition to the responsibilities unique to the roll of Elder as listed in section 3, he will provide vision and leadership for the congregation and The Elder Board, serving as Moderator of both. He will consider his primary responsibility that of preparing God's people for the work of service (Ephesians 4:11-16). In addition to preaching and teaching the Word of God, he will set a pattern of prayer, personal evangelism and good works commensurate with his office.
- B. The Sr. Pastor must be an approved minister in the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, meeting the qualifications for the office of Elder as set forth in *I Timothy 3:1-7, and Titus 1:6-9*.
- C. The church may elect additional pastors to assist the Sr. Pastor in his work. These men are to be identified and qualified by the Sr. Pastor before consideration by the voting membership.

## **Section 3: Elders**

- A. The congregation will elect Elders, men who fit the qualifications set forth in *I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9*.
- B. The Elders will be responsible for the oversight of all matters of church life and practice. They will see that opportunity be given for regular times of public worship, prayer, and observation of the Christian ordinances.
- C. The Elder Board will serve as corporate officers of the church.

## **Section 4: Deacons**

The congregation will elect Deacons according to the qualifications of *I Timothy 3:8-13*. Their ministries will be to assist the Elder Board. They will serve on ministry teams listed in Article 7, section 5.

## **Section 5: Ministries**

- A. Ministry teams are formed to involve the congregation in the work of the ministry and include but are not limited to the following:
  - 1. Christian Education
  - 2. Congregational Care
  - 3. Evangelism, Church Planting and Missions
  - 4. Finance
  - 5. Property and Maintenance
  - 6. Worship and Prayer
- B. The Elder Board may create new ministry teams as the need arises, with the approval of the congregation.

## **Article VIII: Amendments**

This constitution may be amended by a two-thirds vote of all members present and eligible to vote at any regular meeting of the membership, or at a special meeting called for that purpose. Announcements from the pulpit and in the church bulletin over a two week period will be considered sufficient notice for such proposed amendment(s).

