

# CONSTITUTION



Charis Fellowship is registered as an Assumed Business Name of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc. in the state of Indiana.

## ARTICLE I – OFFICES

The principal office of the corporation shall be located at Winona Lake, Indiana. The corporation may have other offices as its business may require.

## ARTICLE II – PURPOSE STATEMENT

The Charis Fellowship exists to encourage and enable member churches in equipping and uniting the saints in fulfilling the Great Commission.

## ARTICLE III – COVENANT AND IDENTITY STATEMENT

**Section One. Covenant.** The sovereign congregations which are members of this corporation are united in accepting the Holy Scriptures as the sole guide and authority in all matters of faith, doctrine and practice.

**Section Two. Identity Statement.** Charis Fellowship churches have a corporate commitment to a basic body of beliefs founded on God's revealed truth. Historical documents including The Message of the Brethren Ministry (1921) and the Statement of Faith (1969) helped to guide our growth and development for many years. The Charis Commitment to Common Identity (first adopted 2015) as approved by the national conference is the current expression of our ongoing quest to apply the unchanging truth of God's Word to the constantly changing realities and needs of our world.

Individual churches who are members of the Charis Fellowship remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, yet we share a common passion for Jesus, His truth, His mission, and His Church.

## ARTICLE IV – MEMBERSHIP

**Section One. Requirements.** Any congregation of believers desiring membership in the Charis Fellowship shall meet the following conditions:

1. It shall agree to cooperate harmoniously within the parameters outlined by the Charis Commitment to Common Identity and the Position Statements.
2. It shall actively pursue the purpose of the Charis Fellowship as set forth in Article II.
3. It shall have a basic organization consisting of elder(s) and deacon(s), or similar responsible officers.
4. Requirements and responsibilities for local church membership shall be established by each church and shall not determine the church's membership in the Fellowship.

5. No church shall be denied membership in the corporation because of failure to support any institutions, ministries, or boards, either district, national, or cooperating recognized by the Fellowship.
6. Failure to comply with these corporate membership requirements may subject the church to dismissal.

**Section Two. Voting Rights.** Each member church shall be entitled to be represented at any meeting of the corporation through delegate(s) of its choosing.

1. Each member church shall be entitled to at least two delegates as specified in the Manual of Procedure.
2. Only persons who are members of the Charis Fellowship church they represent shall be seated as delegates to any meeting of the corporation. Representation at National Conference is based on the average attendance at the largest regular gathering of the local church.
3. Each member church shall be entitled to one vote per delegate on each matter submitted to a vote at any meeting of the corporation.

## **ARTICLE V – MEETINGS OF MEMBERS**

**Section One. Annual Meeting.** The annual meeting of members shall be held at the time and place recommended by the Fellowship Council and approved at a previous annual meeting of members. This annual meeting is referred to in this Constitution and the Manual of Procedure as "the annual meeting of the corporation" and "conference."

**Section Two. Special Meetings.** Special meetings of members may be called by the Fellowship Council for emergency needs at any time and place designated by it. Member churches shall be represented at any special meeting by the delegates who represented them at the last annual meeting or duly certified alternates.

**Section Three. Quorum.** A quorum shall consist of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at any meeting of the corporation.

**Section Four. Delegates.** The following shall be seated as delegates to any meeting of the corporation:

1. Officers. Officers of the corporation shall be delegates ex-officio with voting privileges.
2. Delegates shall be seated provided that the delegates meet the qualifications of Article IV, Section Two, points #1 and 2.

## **ARTICLE VI – FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL (BOARD OF DIRECTORS)**

**Section One. General Powers.** The business and affairs of the corporation shall be managed by its board of directors which shall be known as the Fellowship Council.

**Section Two. Number and Term.** The number of members of the Fellowship Council shall be seventeen. Fifteen members shall be elected by the corporation, and each shall serve a term of five years. The fifteen elected members shall represent the three geographic regions of the United States described in Article V, Section Two, point #3 of the Manual of Procedure with five members to serve

from each region. Only one member of any single church or two representatives from any single district shall serve on the Council at any one time, not including ex-officio members of the Council.

The remaining two members of the Fellowship Council shall be the Executive Director and the Assistant Director. They shall serve a one, two, or three-year term to which they are elected as Executive Director and Assistant Director. Council members will begin their terms at the conclusion of the conference at which they are elected with the exception of the Executive Director and Assistant Director who shall begin their term one year following the conference at which they are elected.

**Section Three. Qualifications.** All nominees for Council membership must be triune immersed members in good standing of congregations that are members of the Charis Fellowship.\* They must be men who have met the spiritual qualifications for an elder as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9. All nominees shall subscribe to the Covenant and Statement of Faith as stated in Article III of this Constitution. They must have given their consent to nomination and service. Members of the Council may not serve consecutive terms but may be reelected after two years absence from the Council. This restriction shall not apply to members serving fewer than three years or to ex-officio members of the Council.

#### **Section Four. Election.**

1. Members of the Council shall be elected by majority affirmative vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at the Conference from a ballot presented by the Nominating Committee. In the event that no nominee receives a majority affirmative vote, there shall be an additional ballot presented with the two nominees who have received the highest number of votes.
2. Voting for nominees from each of the three regions shall be restricted to delegates from the churches in those regions.
3. Nominees elected to the Council shall be the one from each region receiving the majority affirmative vote of the delegates representing those regions present, entitled to vote, and voting.

**Section Five. Position Statements.** The Fellowship Council shall develop Position Statements deemed necessary and helpful for the Charis Fellowship to address or clarify specific issues of culture, theology, or practice within the ministry context of North America. Position Statements will require a 2/3rd vote of affirmation from delegates at the annual business meeting of the corporation. In addition, each Position Statement will require reaffirmation by the delegates every five years.

## **ARTICLE VII – OFFICERS**

**Section One. Officers.** The officers of the corporation shall be the Executive Director, Assistant Director, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Executive Director shall serve as chairman of the Fellowship Council, and the vice Assistant Director as vice chairman of the same body.

**Section Two. Election.** The Executive Director and Assistant Director shall be elected together on a single ballot question to a one, two, or three-year term by majority affirmative vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at the annual meeting of the corporation one year prior to the beginning of their term.

The Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected annually by majority vote of the Fellowship Council at its annual meeting. These elections shall be ratified by the corporation at the annual meeting immediately following the election.

**Section Three. Term.** The Executive Director and Assistant Director will be installed at the conclusion of the conference one year after they are elected and will serve for their elected term or until their successors are elected or appointed and installed. The Secretary and Treasurer will be installed at the conclusion of the conference at which they are elected and will serve for one conference year or until their successors are elected or appointed and installed.

**Section Four. Responsibilities and Duties.** The officers shall have the powers and discharge the duties customarily and usually held and performed by like officers in similar corporations, including, but not limited to those outlined in the Manual of Procedure.

## **ARTICLE VIII – COMMITTEES**

**Section One. Committees.** The Fellowship Council, by resolution of a majority of the Council members, may designate one or more committees or persons to exercise the authority of the Fellowship Council to the extent provided in the resolution. The resolution shall include a termination date for the committee's service which may be extended only by specific action of the Fellowship Council or the Conference.

### **Section Two. Nominating Committee.**

1. A nominating committee of six members shall be elected annually by the conference from nominees suggested by the Fellowship Council. All nominees shall be members in good standing of congregations that are members of the Charis Fellowship and have agreed to nomination and service. Additional nominations from the floor may be accepted.
2. The chair shall be selected by the Fellowship Council from among the elected committee members.

### **Section Three. Parliamentary Committee.**

1. A parliamentary committee of three members shall be named by the Fellowship Council prior to the conference.
2. It shall be the duty of this committee to interpret this Constitution and the Manual of Procedure whenever questions concerning them shall arise and to assist the presiding officer in questions of procedure and in the orderly conduct of the business sessions of the conference.

## **ARTICLE IX – AMENDMENTS TO CONSTITUTION**

**Section One. Amendments.** This Constitution may be altered or repealed at any annual or special meeting of the corporation by two thirds majority affirmative vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at said meeting, provided that the proposed amendment had been presented to the delegates at a previous business session of the conference and to the Fellowship Council for study and recommendation.