05 | Charter of the Circle of the Elders / Praeceptorium

Revised draft 2026-10-10 | Version 6 | Operative only upon authorized adoption

Revision scope: foremost doctrinal standard and permanent safeguards; continuity, incapacity, voting, conflicts, and emergency reconstitution. Praeceptorium names the Order; Praeceptorius is the founder's exclusive personal title.

Article I-A | Foremost judgment and permanent doctrinal fidelity

The Order, the Circle of the Elders, the Praeceptorium, within This Grace Bible Churches shall remain steadfast in the Gospel of Christ, sound doctrine, the King James Bible, and Pauline Dispensational Doctrine, and shall never depart. Fidelity to these foundations is the number-one judgment of this Order: the first governing criterion by which every teaching, study, appointment, credential, decision, policy, association, and exercise of authority shall be examined.

The Gospel that saves today is the Gospel of Christ set forth in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 in the King James Bible: Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures. The Order shall preserve and proclaim this Gospel and shall reject its replacement, alteration, dilution, or mixture with a different gospel or religious requirements for salvation.

The King James Bible is the Order's final scriptural authority. The Order shall not go to Greek or Hebrew for its studies, doctrinal determinations, or correction of the English text. No member, teacher, invited advisor, acting appointee, panel, or successor shall attempt to change, revise, supposedly correct, or overrule the King James Bible by appeal to Greek, Hebrew, another translation, scholarship, tradition, or religious authority.

The Order shall uphold sound doctrine through Pauline Dispensational Doctrine and right division of the King James Bible, recognizing the doctrinal instruction for the Church, the Body of Christ, in Romans through Philemon. It shall distinguish Israel's prophecy program from the doctrine and instructions given for the Body of Christ. All scripture shall be studied within that distinction; instructions belonging to Israel shall not be imposed as ordinances or salvation requirements for the Body of Christ.

The Order shall avoid corrupt doctrines and doctrines drawn from what is called Christianity. No doctrine is authorized by the label Christianity, denomination, creed, council, popularity, tradition, or institutional approval. Its teaching shall be established from the King James Bible rightly divided, consistent with the Gospel of Christ and Pauline Dispensational Doctrine. The Order shall avoid the religions of this present evil world and their doctrinal and religious influences.

The Order shall not practice, administer, sponsor, require, or authorize water baptism for the Church, the Body of Christ. Within the Order's doctrine, water baptism belongs to Israel in its prophecy program, in which believing Israel is to become a kingdom of priests and priests wash before serving in their office. Water baptism was never, and is not now, an ordinance for the Church, the Body of Christ. It shall not be introduced as a condition of salvation, fellowship membership, credentialing, or admission to the Circle.

These foundations are permanent limits on every authority created by this Charter. No ordinary or extraordinary vote, unanimous consent, doctrinal clarification, amendment, emergency, incapacity arrangement, reconstitution, or succession may authorize departure. Clarification may explain and apply these foundations but may not revise, weaken, suspend, or contradict them. An action contrary to this Article is unauthorized under this Charter; no officer or member shall implement it.

Every applicant, appointee, admitted member, and successor shall expressly affirm this Article in writing before assuming duties. Proposed teaching and governing actions shall be assessed against it, with the conclusion recorded for admissions, credentials, succession, and doctrinal determinations. An alleged departure requires prompt examination under Article VIII and the Discipline Code; substantiated departure requires cessation and correction of the contrary teaching and the appropriate separately recorded credential, participation, or membership action. No claim of doctrinal fidelity dispenses with the required fair-review procedures.

Article I | Identity and purpose

The Circle of the Elders is the Praeceptorium, the internal teaching and oversight body of This Grace Bible Churches (TGBC). Praeceptorius is an alternate title for the Founding Bishop within the Circle of the Elders. Bishop Wesley Ray, Founding Bishop, is the original and sole Praeceptorius. This title is personal and exclusive to him and is not transferred by incapacity, death, temporary appointment, or succession. No Acting or succeeding Overseeing Bishop acquires the title of Founding Bishop or Praeceptorius. The Praeceptorius oversees all affairs within the Praeceptorium, the Circle of the Elders. Praeceptorium names the body; Praeceptorius refers to the Founding Bishop in that body. These are adopted ecclesiastical designations, not a separate legal entity, incorporation status, or third ordained office. The Praeceptorium works to preserve sound doctrine, examine qualified ministry, counsel assemblies, address ecclesiastical disputes, safeguard continuity, and perform the duties assigned by superior instruments.

Article II | Exclusive eligibility

No woman may serve as a member of the Circle of the Elders / Praeceptorium. No woman shall hold the office of Bishop, Elder, or Deacon within This Grace Bible Churches (TGBC). These restrictions apply throughout TGBC, including the Circle of the Elders / Praeceptorium. Only men qualified and recognized as bishops or elders under the Credentialing Manual may be admitted. They must affirm TGBC's Gospel, KJB authority, right division, Pauline doctrine, and governing order, and accept accountability for their work. Deacons are excluded from Praeceptorium membership and voting by virtue of their deacon office. A deacon may assist or attend by invitation on a particular matter without becoming a member. A former or serving deacon can enter only after a separate bishop or elder qualification decision and express Praeceptorium admission. Donors, relatives, volunteers, ordinary members, and outside advisors do not gain seats automatically.

Article III | Initial member and appointments

Bishop Wesley Ray, Founding Bishop and sole Praeceptorius, is the sole initial member and presiding officer of the Praeceptorium. His initial decisions shall be signed and recorded as sole-member actions. During his lifetime, the Praeceptorius shall select new members or give final approval to their admission to the Praeceptorium, the Circle of the Elders. No new member may be admitted without his express written approval. Each new member must be a qualified bishop or elder and shall be admitted by written appointment and acceptance identifying the underlying qualification record. After the founder's death, admission requires the extraordinary vote of the existing Praeceptorium. If it is empty, use Article XI, subject to Article XII. At least one current adult local fellowship membership shall be identified for each Praeceptorium member. Keep a controlled roster with dates of admission, assigned work, voting eligibility, changes, and departure. During the founder's incapacity, Article X governs temporary service. Only a contingent appointment expressly approved and signed by him while capable may activate without a further signature. No other person may supply his approval.

The founder may sign a contingent admission identifying a particular qualified bishop or elder, the triggering vacancy or event, any expiration date, and the scope of membership and voting rights. The candidate must accept in writing. At activation, the custodian shall verify the specified event and continued qualification from the credentialing record; where a fresh qualification determination is necessary, the authorized credentialing body must make it before activation. A disputed or unverifiable condition does not activate admission. No blanket delegation to select unidentified members is permitted. The founder may revoke the contingent appointment while capable.

Article IV | Duties and boundaries

The Praeceptorium examines doctrine by the KJB, provides teaching and oversight, reviews candidates, addresses matters under the Discipline Code, and maintains succession readiness. It may appoint recordkeepers and invite specialists or advisors without giving them Praeceptorium membership or ecclesiastical votes. The Praeceptorium cannot replace the Gospel of Christ, abandon KJB authority or right division, create another Founding Bishop, appropriate private property, authorize a member's unlawful conduct, or bind a separate local assembly without applicable authority. It has no power to abolish or transfer the founder's protected lifetime office.

Article V | Notice and participation

Give at least seven days' notice of an ordinary meeting and 14 days' notice of an extraordinary meeting, stating the subject and supplying proposed text. Amendment, foundational doctrine, and dissolution notice periods in the Bylaws control when longer. Every eligible member must receive notice by a reliable recorded method. Members may meet in person, by telephone, or by video with simultaneous participation and verified identity. A member may waive notice in writing. An emergency meeting may use shorter notice only for necessary preservation or protection; record attempts to reach all members and the reason for urgency. It may not bypass required amendment or permanent succession approval.

Article VI | Quorum and votes

For each matter, the eligible voting pool consists of admitted members entitled to vote, excluding validly suspended members and persons recused for that matter. Quorum is more than half of that pool, rounded down plus one; one eligible voter constitutes a quorum of one. A recused person may supply requested factual information but does not count toward quorum or vote on that matter. Recusals, reasons, pool size, quorum, and votes shall be recorded before action.

An ordinary action requires more than half of votes actually cast at a meeting with quorum. Record abstentions and exclude them from votes cast. Ties fail; the chair has no extra casting vote. An extraordinary action requires at least two-thirds of the entire eligible voting pool, rounded up, and a meeting with quorum. At least one disinterested authorized voter must act. No proxy voting is permitted. Written consent without a meeting requires every member of the eligible voting pool to sign identical text and receive the required notice; recused members receive notice but do not sign as approvers.

During the founder's lifetime, his written concurrence is additionally required for matters expressly reserved to him. His concurrence is not required to approve his own conflicted transaction, investigate his conduct, or decide his credential or participation status under Article VIII. Those matters require independent procedures and cannot transfer or abolish his protected personal titles. Temporary appointees cannot provide his concurrence. If no eligible voter remains, no Circle decision may be made; Article VII permits only its limited financial-review exception, and Article XI applies only after the founder's death.

An emergency does not reduce voting thresholds or permit permanent succession, foundational doctrinal change, or amendment without the required procedure. The sole eligible member records his decision by signature, without inventing additional votes.

Decision requirements

Decision	Approval and notice
Routine authorized ministry	Ordinary vote; 7 days
Circle admission during founder's life	Express written founder approval; Article III
Admission after founder's death	Extraordinary vote; 14 days
Involuntary removal / credential action	Article VIII; extraordinary vote; 14 days
Permanent Overseeing Bishop	Article IX; extraordinary vote; 14 days
Foundational doctrinal clarification	Unanimity; Article I-A cannot be altered
Amendment or dissolution	Superior procedure; 14 days; Article I-A binds
Temporary activation / restoration	Article X evidence; no succession vote
Conflicted financial transaction	Conflict Policy and Article VII

Article VII | Conflicts and independent review

A member shall disclose material conflicts and follow the Conflict Policy for compensation, reimbursements, related parties, and financial decisions. Disinterested members decide disputed recusals; a person does not decide his own conflict. If no disinterested member remains, the limited written financial-review authorization below may be used, or the transaction remains unapproved.

An outside disinterested reviewer may approve a specified financial transaction only under an advance written authorization and the Conflict Policy. The authorization must identify the reviewer, covered transactions, limits, and records required. A conflicted person may supply information but cannot approve the transaction or select a reviewer for that transaction unless a previously adopted policy expressly provides an independent selection method. This administrative exception grants no Circle seat, ecclesiastical vote, credentialing authority, power to appoint a bishop or successor, or power to amend governing instruments.

Article VIII | Member status, credentials, and fair review

Ordinary Circle membership may end by resignation, death, substantial incapacity, abandonment of doctrine, serious misconduct, or removal under the Discipline Code. Involuntary action requires written allegations, reliable notice, at least 14 days to respond unless an existing superior instrument requires longer, a meaningful opportunity to be heard, written findings, and an extraordinary vote of disinterested eligible members. Any urgent interim suspension must be specifically authorized by the Discipline Code and promptly reviewed. No allegation alone creates a suspension.

The founder's lifetime status as Founding Bishop and his exclusive personal title Praeceptorius cannot be transferred or abolished. Protection of those titles does not exempt his credentials or exercise of duties from doctrinal and disciplinary review. Circle removal, credential withdrawal, office disqualification, limits on active duties, and fellowship status are separate decisions and must be separately stated. Any restriction on the founder's active participation must rest on the Discipline Code and independent findings; it does not create a new Founding Bishop or Praeceptorius.

The subject does not vote or count toward quorum in his own case. Loss or valid suspension of recognized bishop or elder qualification suspends voting and active Circle participation until resolved. Where no disinterested Circle member remains, ecclesiastical findings may be made only by a qualified independent panel expressly designated in advance by the founder and authorized in the Discipline Code. Administrative custodians and financial reviewers cannot substitute. Without that authorized panel, the disciplinary decision remains pending; medical incapacity remains governed separately by Article X.

A deacon cannot fill a vacant seat without separate bishop or elder qualification and express admission. A temporary acting bishop receives neither a seat nor a vote solely from his temporary appointment.

Article IX | Permanent succession and records

Keep controlled records of appointments, acceptances, membership, qualifications, meetings, notices, quorum, conflicts, exact decisions, votes, concurrence, incapacity evidence, and succession. The custodian shall keep an inventory of record locations and authorized access, with a secure recovery copy available to an authorized alternate.

After the founder's death, a nonempty Circle shall select a qualified and recognized bishop or elder as Overseeing Bishop by extraordinary vote after at least 14 days' notice. Any additional valid requirements in the Succession Declaration apply. If that instrument contains no usable procedure, this procedure supplies the default, subject to Article XII. The appointee must accept in writing; record qualifications, vote, acceptance, and effective date. No person succeeds automatically by seniority, relationship, wealth, designation as acting bishop, or personal title.

If the Circle is empty, Article XI governs reconstitution before permanent selection. Incapacity does not activate permanent succession. Temporary administrative preservation continues only within separately existing authority pending recorded handover.

Article X | Incapacity and temporary continuity

1. Advance appointments. While capable, the founder may designate a qualified recognized bishop or elder as Acting Overseeing Bishop and another as alternate, and an administrative custodian and administrative alternate. Each must accept in writing. Ecclesiastical designees require documented qualification. The alternate serves only if the primary is unavailable, unwilling, or no longer qualified. Designation gives no Circle seat, vote, exclusive title, or permanent succession right. Blank fields appoint nobody. The founder may amend or revoke appointments while capable.

2. Assessment responsibility. The custodian, or administrative alternate, may request the founder's voluntary declaration or arrange assessment by two independent licensed physicians. Independence means neither physician is a proposed successor, a party to the governance dispute, or financially interested in its outcome. Obtain necessary consent or other applicable authority for examination and access; this charter itself grants no access to medical records. If neither custodian can act, an already authorized recordkeeper may coordinate within existing authority. No coordinator makes the medical determination.

3. Activation. Temporary service begins on the effective date in the founder's signed declaration, or after two independent licensed physicians separately give written findings that illness or injury prevents him from understanding, communicating, or carrying out the relevant responsibilities. Identify the functional limits and effective date. Age, absence, disagreement, or an unpopular decision is not incapacity. Conflicting findings do not satisfy activation; further assessment may be sought, but two independent current findings supporting incapacity remain necessary. Preserve only necessary functional findings. Notify the founder, designees, custodian, and admitted Circle members and record delivery attempts.

4. Acting authority. The available qualified designee may coordinate routine teaching, pastoral oversight, existing ministry work, and administration already authorized. Existing voting, conflict, and financial controls continue. He may not admit unidentified new members, supply the founder's reserved concurrence, alter foundational doctrine, amend governing instruments, transfer the founder's protected office or title, appoint a permanent successor, dissolve TGBC, or dispose of major assets. Article III contingent admissions may activate only on their signed conditions. No new bank-signing or contractual authority is created.

5. Administrative fallback. If neither ecclesiastical designee can serve, the custodian, then administrative alternate, may safeguard records and property, maintain communications, coordinate existing commitments, and arrange essential previously authorized payments within separately existing authority. Neither acquires ecclesiastical office, membership, a vote, ordination authority, or successor-selection power. Unassigned ecclesiastical decisions remain suspended. If both administrative appointees are unavailable, only preservation duties already assigned to an existing recordkeeper or trustee continue. This fallback applies even when the founder is the sole member.

6. Review and restoration. The custodian and available acting bishop record a review at least every 90 days of functional status, designee availability, contingent appointments, and necessary preservation work. If the founder activated service himself, his signed recovery declaration ends it. If activation rested on physician findings, his signed recovery declaration plus one independent licensed physician's written finding of restored relevant capacity ends it. An acting appointee has no veto. Temporary authority ends immediately; promptly return control and records and notify members. Prolonged incapacity never converts into permanent succession.

7. Death. Temporary ecclesiastical authority under this Article ends at death. Articles IX and XI govern permanent continuity. Custodians continue only necessary preservation within existing authority until handover. A title, relationship, or possession of records does not create succession authority.

Article XI | Emergency reconstitution of an empty Circle after death

This Article applies only after the founder's death when no admitted Circle member remains. It cannot be used during his lifetime, to bypass his written admission approval, or to remove a living member. The custodian shall verify death and the last controlled roster, preserve the records, and notify all identifiable adult local fellowship members through recorded channels.

First use the founder's signed emergency reconstitution designation: it must name at least two qualified male bishops or elders, their acceptances and qualification references, and their authority to constitute a temporary reconstitution panel. The panel may verify qualifications and admit qualified male bishops or elders solely to restore the Circle under the unchanged doctrinal and eligibility standards. Panel appointment alone creates no Circle seat or successor right. Use a majority of available designated panel members, with at least two participating, and record reasons and admissions.

If no usable designated panel exists, the adult local fellowship membership shown in controlled TGBC records immediately before death may choose a reconstitution panel. Give at least 21 days' notice to all identifiable eligible adults, describe the sole purpose, and verify identity and membership. Quorum is more than half of that recorded adult membership; selection requires two-thirds of votes cast, with at least two participating voters. No proxy votes. Fellowship participation in this emergency selection creates no ecclesiastical office or Circle seat.

The selected panel must contain at least two disinterested male bishops or elders whose qualifications can be established under the existing Credentialing Manual, using controlled records and any duly authorized independent credentialing procedure. A panel candidate does not vote on his own panel selection. If conflicts or insufficient eligible membership prevent a valid selection, or two qualified panel members cannot be established, ecclesiastical reconstitution remains pending; administrative preservation alone continues. No outside person may self-appoint or invent membership or qualifications.

Before admitting anyone, the panel shall unanimously document qualification findings and written acceptance of the unchanged governing doctrine for each proposed member. It shall admit at least two qualified members where available, record their appointments, and deliver the roster and records. Once the Circle is restored, panel authority ends. The restored Circle selects the Overseeing Bishop under Article IX; neither the custodian nor the panel independently appoints the permanent successor. No emergency procedure permits new doctrine, governing amendments, dissolution, major-asset disposal, or inheritance of the founder's exclusive titles.

Article XII | Document priority, adoption, and readiness

Article I-A states the permanent doctrinal limits of this Charter and must be expressly reconciled with the superior instruments at adoption. The Constitution controls; the Bylaws follow; this Charter follows; then duly adopted policies and manuals within their assigned subjects. A Succession Declaration implements the superior instruments and cannot contradict them. A specific valid delegation governs its stated subject only. Maintain an adoption register identifying the title, edition, effective date, and amendment authority of each instrument. An unresolved superior conflict suspends only the conflicting provision; consistent preservation duties continue.

Before adoption, compare this revision with the Constitution, Bylaws, Succession Declaration, Credentialing Manual, Discipline Code, Conflict Policy, and financial authorizations. Record necessary conforming amendments and adopt them through their own required procedures. This charter does not silently amend another instrument or grant bank, property, contractual, or medical authority.

Before treating continuity arrangements as ready, record accepted primary and alternate appointments, any contingent admissions, the emergency panel designation, record-access arrangements, separately established payment and signing authority, and any independent discipline panel. Maintain an unresolved-items list. Blank appointments or missing external authority must be identified explicitly; adoption alone does not fill them.

Appointment schedule and adoption

Enter actual selections and retain signed acceptances and qualification records. Blank entries appoint nobody. Additional signed schedules may be attached and identified by date and record reference.

Primary Acting Overseeing Bishop

Full name: _____

Bishop / elder qualification record: _____

Acceptance date: _____ Record reference: _____

Alternate Acting Overseeing Bishop

Full name: _____

Bishop / elder qualification record: _____

Acceptance date: _____ Record reference: _____

Administrative custodian

Full name: _____

Acceptance date: _____ Record reference: _____

Administrative alternate

Full name: _____

Acceptance date: _____ Record reference: _____

Emergency reconstitution panel (at least two qualified male bishops or elders)

1. Name: _____ Qualification: _____
Acceptance date / record: _____

2. Name: _____ Qualification: _____
Acceptance date / record: _____

3. Name: _____ Qualification: _____
Acceptance date / record: _____

Supporting authorizations and adoption

Doctrinal affirmation (all appointees and admitted members)

I affirm Article I-A, including the Gospel of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 KJB, King James Bible authority, Pauline Dispensational Doctrine, the restrictions on Greek and Hebrew studies and Bible correction, and the prohibition of water baptism for the Body of Christ. I accept its permanent limits on my duties.

Name: _____ Signature: _____
Role: _____ Date: _____

Separate schedules and authorizations

Contingent Circle admissions (names and activation conditions):

_____

Independent discipline panel authorized by Discipline Code:

_____

Records, recovery access, financial limits and signing authorizations:

_____

Governing-document adoption register and conforming amendments:

_____

Founder's designation

I designate the persons entered above for the specified temporary and emergency roles, subject to their written acceptances, qualification requirements, and the limits of this Charter. No designation transfers my personal titles or creates permanent succession rights.

Wesley Ray, Founding Bishop and sole Praeceptorius

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Adoption

Authorized adopting person / body: _____
Signature: _____
Adoption date: _____ Effective date: _____
Adoption record and conforming-amendment references: _____

_____

Initial roster entry: Wesley Ray, Founding Bishop and sole Praeceptorius, sole initial member of the Praeceptorium.