

06 Founding Bishop and Succession Declaration

Edition 2026 10 03 R2 | Operative only upon authorized adoption

The unique founding office

Bishop Wesley Ray, known in prior organizational records as Wesley Scott Ray, is the one Founding Bishop of TGBC. His historical office and title belong to him for his natural life, cannot be transferred or duplicated, and permanently cease as an active office upon his death. Historical recognition of him may continue thereafter.

He is the sole initial member of PRAECEPTORIUS until a qualified bishop or elder is expressly admitted. Later admissions do not terminate his founding title or founding authority. Deacons do not become members through ordination or service.

Continuity preparations

Keep current governing instruments, signed Circle admission records, local membership rosters, any lawful asset and liability records, credentials, and emergency access instructions. The founder may identify qualified potential successors for examination, but a personal nomination is not an automatic election or an inheritance of office.

TGBC assets remain with their lawful organizational owner and do not pass to the founder's heirs merely because he dies. Personally owned assets remain subject to their own lawful ownership and estate arrangements; church custody or use alone does not make them TGBC property.

Temporary absence or incapacity

Follow the Bylaws' temporary oversight procedure. A qualified bishop or elder may act within a recorded temporary mandate. Deacons or custodians may perform assigned preservation and administration without ecclesiastical succession or Circle membership. Reassess incapacity at least every 90 days and restore the founder's ordinary administration when ability returns.

No person may use incapacity to claim the founding title, permanently install an Overseeing Bishop, or pass an unrelated founder-dependent amendment. Lawful safety duties and actual civil orders remain applicable.

Succession after death

Document the death and notify recorded Circle members. They shall convene as soon as practical, ordinarily within 30 days, with 14 days' notice where feasible. Existing qualified members constitute the succession body. If no members remain, first use the Bylaws' emergency reconstitution procedure; deacons do not automatically fill the Circle.

The Circle shall invite nominations and examine candidates under the Credentialing Manual. A candidate must qualify as a bishop or elder, affirm the TGBC foundational doctrine, accept the Constitution, recognize the permanent end of the founding office, and agree to preserve organizational records and proper stewardship.

Selection and acceptance

Selection requires a meeting with quorum and at least two-thirds of all eligible voting Circle members, rounded up. This edition uses that full-membership threshold for succession so that absence alone does not lower the required approval. A candidate's eligibility to vote follows ordinary membership and conflict rules; record any direct material conflict separately. No vote may be bought or inherited.

If no candidate reaches the required approval, continue deliberation and later ballots without installing a plurality winner. During the vacancy, the Circle authorizes limited interim oversight and administration. A sole remaining qualified Circle member may make the required recorded succession decision but must first obtain written examination and advice from at least two independent qualified bishops or elders; they have no automatic Circle votes.

The chosen man signs acceptance of the title Overseeing Bishop of THIS GRACE BIBLE CHURCHES. Record examination, notice, roster, quorum, ballots, decision, acceptance, date, scope, and credential reference. Admission to PRAECEPTORIUS, if not already held, is recorded expressly as part of the appointment.

Authority and later vacancies

The Overseeing Bishop administers doctrine, ministry, recognized assemblies, and the governing order within the powers assigned by the Constitution and Circle. He has no founding title, lifetime founding protection, inherited ownership, or power to replace foundational doctrine. He remains subject to qualification and discipline.

A later vacancy caused by death, resignation, disqualification, or substantial incapacity invokes the same selection principles. Temporary incapacity may be addressed by an acting assignment. If the Circle is empty, use emergency reconstitution before permanent selection.

Declaration and acceptance by the founder

I accept the unique Founding Bishop office and my initial sole membership in PRAECEPTORIUS. I acknowledge Scripture, the governing instruments, independent financial review where required, safeguarding duties, and applicable civil law. I affirm that no title confers personal ownership of TGBC property or immunity from lawful accountability.

Wesley Ray signature _____ Date _____

Adoption authority _____ Effective date _____ Record _____

Witness name and signature _____ Date _____