

**BY-LAWS**  
**of**  
**THE CHURCH OF GRACE VILLAGE, INC.**

**SECTION 1 – THEOLOGICAL STATEMENTS, FAITH, AND BELIEFS**

**ARTICLE I – NAME**

The name of this church is THE CHURCH OF GRACE VILLAGE, INC. (“TCGV”), a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Tennessee.

**ARTICLE II – AFFILIATION**

TCGV is a faith community of the Presbyterian Church in America (“PCA”). We are members of, and accountable to, the Nashville Presbytery.

**ARTICLE III – STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PURPOSE**

TCGV is a Reformed, God-honoring, Christ-exalting, grace-centered faith community. We believe the Bible as the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be inspired, inerrant, and infallible, the only rule of faith and practice. We adopt the Westminster Confession of Faith, Larger and Shorter Catechisms, along with the historic creeds i.e. The Apostles Creed, The Nicene Creed, The Heidelberg Catechism etc. as a summary of our doctrinal convictions.

We adhere to the Presbyterian form of government and the Book of Church Order (“BCO”) as informing and directing our process and practice.

Our Mission: TCGV exists that God’s grace, unveiled in the fullness of Jesus Christ, might reign (Rom 5:21) through the advance and extension of His Kingdom in every sphere of life. (Acts 1:8).

Our Vision: TCGV strives to be a sanctuary of hope, healing, renewal, and belonging (Isaiah 61) *to our community and neighbors.*

The fulfillment of the TCGV Mission and Vision through four (4) foundational practices:

- Teaching, Training, and Discipleship: Through the faithful preaching and teaching of God’s Word, faithful prayer, and dependence on the Holy Spirit, we strive to make disciples, rooted and grounded in love (Col 2:7), equipped for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:12).

- Faithful Worship and Proclamation: Our worship is distinctively Reformed in its expression which centers on two focal points of celebration: The Word and the Sacraments.

Principles guiding the form and function of our worship includes the following:

- Historic and Traditional: Worship that is *historic* recognizes the “history of the Holy Spirit” as it has given light and truth to past generations of faithful Christians. Worship that is *traditional* draws, and benefits from the accumulated wisdom, lore, and values of past generations.
- Reformed and Relevant: TCGV has “inhabited” the Reformed tradition (Word and Sacraments) though we borrow freely from the strengths of other church movements and traditions.
  - To be *relevant* is to be “contemporary” against the backdrop of history, effectively bridge the ancient and eternal truths of our faith into the modern contemporary world. Our musical expression incorporates different types of instrumentation appropriate to the theme.
    - Musical Style: Our worship is hymn-driven, augmented with a steady influence of contemporary songs and modern hymns. The sources of music from which we draw on a regular basis include traditional hymns from the Trinity Hymnal (traditional hymns sometimes re-presented with more modern musical style from the Indelible Grace and Red Mountain projects), the modern hymns of Keith and Kristen Getty, and selective songs from contemporary writers such as Fernando Ortega, Matt Redmond, Chris Tomlin, Bob Kauflin, and others.
    - Worship Team and Instrumentation: We are led in worship each Sunday by a well-rehearsed worship team which sometime consists of a keyboard player, vocalists, guitar, bass, percussion (“box” or cajón), and/or cello when available. We are seeking to include and expand our instrumentation as God brings gifted musicians to strengthen and support our worship.
- Liturgical and Dialogical: *Liturgy* forms belonging to community with ritual, and establishes a thoughtful, theologically, substantive context for the worshipping community. Liturgy keeps worshippers engaged (*leitourgia*—Gk. Lit “ergon” work, and “laos” the people, “the work of the people”). *Dialogical* worship is an active, lively, engaging conversation between God and the worshipper,

transforming worshippers from spectator to participant.

- Engaging Culture in the Market Place of Ideas: The world, though fallen and cursed (Gen 3), remains the grand “stage” upon which God unveils the drama of His redemption and rescue through Christ. Therefore, His church serves as the preserving and transformative agent of culture (“salt and light” Matthew 5:13-16), to advance His Kingdom and purposes in the world. We do not “wage war according to the flesh”, but with divine power tear down the strong holds, arguments, and every lofty option that is contrary to God’s truth (II Cor 10:4-5).

TCGV believes that God’s people are commanded to “love our neighbor as ourselves” (Mathew 22:32-40) and, to “seek the welfare of the city” (Jer 29:7).

- Belonging to Community: Through our Grace Group (“GG”) ministry we strive to be intentional and strategic in the fulfillment of the New Commandment, to “love one another” (Jn 13:31-35). Our GG’s are geographically organized and meet weekly for two hours. They include three fundamental components: Prayer, Bible Study, and Fellowship. Our GG’s provide the context for growth in fellowship, friendship, and belonging.

#### Core Values: Shaping Ethos

- Celebrate Sovereign Grace: By awakening to the greater wonder of sovereign, free grace, we walk more deeply in humility before God, each other, and our neighbors.
- Summoned to Greater Purpose: Faith is responding to the summons of God to give our lives away in love to our families, our community, and the needs of our neighbors. In selfless sacrifice we live out the freedom of greater purpose.
- Invited to Fearless Mission: We strive to push beyond our fears of failure, and the idols of comfort to risk for the Kingdoms sake.
- Resting in Relentless Tenderness: Our passion towards obedience in life and ministry springs from the active rest and reward of faith in the finished work of Christ. We add nothing, we merit nothing, and we can diminish nothing from all that Jesus has accomplished. Through striving toward His rest we move forward to accomplish the tasks at hand.

Our Village Vision: Grace Village Vision Statement: The unique expression of TCGV’s mission and vision is the “Grace Village”. Through the creation of four ministry homes organic to our communal life, TCGV seeks to make the “rule and reign” of Christ’s love visible through the following homes:

- Home for people with special needs;
- Home for at-risk girls:

- Home for hospice care; and
- Home for a counseling center, providing for the emotional, spiritual, and psychological health of Grace Village.

#### **ARTICLE IV – STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY**

We believe that all men and woman are created after the image of God and uniquely reflect a divine intrinsic worth that deserves dignity and respect (Gen 2, Ps 8). We therefore believe that love, freedom, human sexuality, and human flourishing is fully experienced and enjoyed when consistently aligned with God's wisdom and purpose, and in submission to His revealed will.

Therefore TCGV Believes:

- God wonderfully and immutably creates personhood after His image as binary: male and female. These two distinct complimentary genders together reflect the divine image of God established at creation, and therefore remain His wise and unchanging design for human freedom, sexuality, and flourishing. (Gen 1:26-27)
- That marriage is defined as the exclusive union of one man and one woman delineated in the Word of God and reaffirmed in the teachings of Jesus (Gen 2:18-25, Mathew 5:31-32). Sexual intercourse as an expression of this unique "oneness" should therefore remain exclusively within the context of marriage between a man and a woman (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4). Sexual activity engaged outside the safe and exclusive bonds of marriage offends the holy character of God, and injures the dignity, design, and value of human personhood.
- TCGV believes that the original sin of Adam and Eve at creation, described as The Fall, brought catastrophic and comprehensive damage to all of God's created order, to include His design for human personhood and sexuality. As the result of the Fall, every aspect of human personhood and sexuality has been distorted and damaged by sin, and therefore finds its ultimate healing and wholeness in the transformative power and grace of the Gospel.
- TCGV recognizes, with humility, the unique complexities of sin's effect on the identity and sexual brokenness of every person who is on a journey of hope, healing, renewal and belonging. We affirm that all people bear the image of God and must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and/or harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual effectively deface God's image, grieve His spirit, and must be repudiated.
- TCGV believes that In order to preserve the unity, peace, and integrity of TCGV's ministry, and to provide a biblical model of integrity to members and the extended

community, all persons employed by TCGV or who serve as volunteers, must agree to and abide by TCGV statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22).

- In addition, every marriage ceremony performed at TCGV is an act of worship and should be conducted accordingly and consistent with our view of the marriage covenant. (ART IV (B))
- TCGV believes that God, through the finished work of his Son Jesus Christ, offers abounding grace, redemption, and restoration to all who confess, repentant, and forsake their sin (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11).

## **ARTICLE V – STATEMENT ON THE SANCTITY OF HUMAN LIFE**

TCGV believes that all human life is sacred and created by God after His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally disabled, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Ps 139).

TCGV believes that upholding the “sanctity of life” compels the proactive, strategic, intentional, involvement of care and support for both mother and child before, during, and after pregnancy.

## **ARTICLE VI - RACIAL RECONCILIATION**

We believe that all men and woman are created after the image of God, and uniquely reflect a divine intrinsic worth that deserves honor and respect (Gen 2, Ps 8). Further, TCGV believes that all human beings derive their origin from Adam and Eve, our first parents, who existed as historic figures at the beginning of creation, and served as “Federal” or “Representative Heads”, progenitors, of the entire human race.

TCGV, therefore believes, that the designation of “race” to distinguish among people groups is not grounded in a Biblical anthropology, but instead is a social construct used to aggravate division and alienation. We acknowledge the grand diversity of ethnicities throughout the world, and to the degree that nations, people groups, and cultures reflect, by common grace, God’s goodness, truth, and beauty, we enjoy and celebrate.

TCGV believes that attitudes of hubris and/or superiority over another human being based on external attributes, personal characteristics, color of skin, ethnic origin, social-economic status, or educational background, is repulsive and repugnant to God (Prov 6:16-19, Eph 2:14-16) and should therefore be repudiated and rejected by His church.

TCGV believes that the church of Jesus Christ has been entrusted with the ministry of

reconciliation, and that the power of the gospel alone is uniquely designed to confront and “tear down the dividing walls of hostility” among people and races. Through the ministry of the gospel, and faithful witness of the church, God is able to redeem the ashes of prejudice, bigotry, and hatred, One New Man in Christ (Eph 2:14-16).

TCGV continues to remain in a place of Godly sorrow and repentance for the past failures and hypocrisy of the church both historically, and within the context of our own denomination (PCA: Paper on Racial Reconciliation 46-General Assembly) with regard to racial injustice.

TCGV desires and strives to be a church community that makes visible the grace, glory and power of the invisible until The Day when every tribe, tongue, and a nation will gather around the throne in worship of The Lamb (Rev 7:9-17).

## **ARTICLE VII - WOMANS ROLES IN THE BODY LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

TCGV believes that men and woman, male and female, are created after the image of God and reflect His divine glory. As His image bearers, men and woman have equal value, dignity, and worth intrinsic to their maleness and femaleness. Men and woman are equal recipients of God’s redemptive love in Christ, co-laborers in the work of the Kingdom, and co-heirs of eternal life in the covenant of grace. In the fullness of the gospels promise men and woman are both “one in Christ” with no distinction of superiority one over another. (Gal 3:23).

TCGV also believes that God, in his sovereign and infinite wisdom has distinguished roles and responsibilities between men and woman commensurate to the unique qualities of masculinity and femininity. These differing roles are designed as complimentary for the purpose of deepening joy, efficiency and health in economy of labor, and the increase of human flourishing.

- **Home--Roles and Responsibilities in Covenant Marriage:** In the context of covenant marriage both husbands and wives look to Christ as their role model. The husband looks to Christ as the “head of his home” leading and loving his wife as “Christ loved the church” (Eph 5:22-33). The wife also looks to Christ as her role model, yielding authority in loving submission to her husband in the support and exercise of his leadership.
- **Church--Roles and Responsibilities in the Life of the Church:** TCGV believes, according the Scriptures, that the offices of ordained leadership (Elders and Deacons) have been entrusted exclusively to men who meet the qualifications requisite of that office (I Tim 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-16).

TCGV also believes the exercise of this oversight includes, but is not limited to, identifying, encouraging, and enlisting the gifts of capable woman to support and edify the work of the local church (Romans 16:1, Acts 18:26, Acts 9:36-42). Woman who demonstrate a heart for God, a heart for service, and the gifts for a particular

area of ministry should be encouraged and supported in the exercise of those gifts.

TCGV therefore believes that at the invitation, and under the oversight of the Sessions authority, capable and gifted woman should be joyfully encourage to serve in the following areas of ministry:

- Teaching Sunday School--Children and Adult
- Committee or Ministry Team Chairs
- Give Ministry reports during the worship service
- Assist in Leading Worship: to include liturgy and music
- Leading in Grace Groups
- Assisting the Deacons in the role as a deaconess (non-ordained) in mercy ministry