

# Governing Council Guiding Principles



## ARTICLE 1: MISSION PRINCIPLES (MP)

*Defining what difference this church will make for whom and to what extent*

### **MP 1.0 COMPREHENSIVE MISSION STATEMENT**

Grace United Methodist Church exists for this purpose: to *“Make New Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World.”*

### **MP 1.1 VISION STATEMENT**

*We will pursue this mission strategically by envisioning Grace UMC as “A Place to Connect”:*

- **Connect with God** through passionate, transformative worship, and intentional discipleship efforts that help people grow in their faith journey as followers of Jesus Christ.
- **Connect with each other** not only through worship, but also through small group communities in which people support and help each other as they encounter Christ, grow as disciples, and discover how God is calling them to serve and share their faith with others.
- **Connect with the world** through compassionate service and faith-sharing ministries in our surrounding community and the farthest reaches of the world.

## ARTICLE 2: BOUNDARY PRINCIPLES (BP)

*Defining the limits of acceptable means that the Senior Pastor is authorized to use in achieving the Mission.*

### **BP 1.0 ETHICAL COMPREHENSIVE STATEMENT**

The Senior Pastor shall cause or seek to ensure that every practice, activity, decision, or organizational circumstance shall be conducted in lawful, prudent, ethical, and biblical manner.

### **BP 1.1 BIBLICAL INTEGRITY STATEMENT**

By upholding the highest standards of Biblical teaching and morality the Senior Pastor shall use and promote conditions, procedures, and decisions that are safe, dignified,

personal, and, when appropriate, provide protections for confidentiality and privacy. Additionally, the Senior Pastor shall maintain personal and professional practices that adhere to the “Rio Texas Sexual Ethics Policy”

## **BP 1.2 FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT STATEMENT**

The Senior Pastor, with the assistance of the staff, member(s) of the Governing Council designated to address finances, shall prepare and submit to the Governing Council an annual budget for review and approval. The Senior Pastor is responsible for managing the budget, and is authorized to reallocate budgeted funds within a functional area to meet needs and respond to ministry opportunities.

***BP 1.2.1 Expenses Over Budget:*** Year to date deviations from the budget that do not result in an increase of the total budgeted expenses of greater than \$5,000 per functional area (as set forth in the budget) may be approved by the Senior Pastor, but must be reported to the member(s) of the Governing Council designated to address finances. The total of all such budget changes shall not exceed 2% of the total budget.

A year to date budgeted expense increase of greater than \$5,000 per functional area must be submitted by the Senior Pastor to the Governing Council for their approval.

All variances in the budget must be approved by the Senior Pastor to spend beyond the approved budget. The Senior Pastor shall inform the member(s) of the Governing Council designated to address finances of any staff, or volunteers that wish to spend beyond their budget.

Budget deviations shall be reviewed quarterly by member(s) of the Governing Council designated to address finances and reported to the Governing Council.

Deviations shall be measured by year to date results.

***BP 1.2.2 Real Property:*** The Senior Pastor shall not acquire, encumber, or dispose of real property, except as may be authorized by the Governing Council and in compliance with the Book of Discipline.

***BP 1.2.3 Asset Protection:*** The Senior Pastor shall annually review, but shall not amend the insurance policy unless authorized by the Governing Council and in compliance with the Book of Discipline. The Senior Pastor shall maintain proper protection for all Grace United Methodist Church intellectual property, information and files, whether paper or electronic.

***BP 1.2.4 Financial Stewardship:*** As spiritual leader of the congregation, the Senior Pastor shall encourage generous giving to support the mission and vision of Grace United Methodist Church.

***BP 1.2.5 Financial Reporting:*** The Senior Pastor shall ensure that Monthly Financial Reports are generated by no later than the 25<sup>th</sup> of the month following the month being reported, The Monthly Financial Reports shall meet the needs of the

Governing Council and include comparisons to Budget.

**BP 1.2.6 Long Term Debt or Contracts:** The Senior Pastor shall not obligate Grace United Methodist Church via long term debt or contracts that exceed two years in length or \$5,000 without approval of the Governing Council.

### **BP 1.3 SENIOR PASTOR - CONGREGATION RELATIONS STATEMENT**

The Senior Pastor shall be the primary spiritual shepherd, leader, and preacher for the congregation. The Senior Pastor shall plan and conduct the various worship services, including sermon preparation and working with others who lead and participate in worship.

The Senior Pastor shall guide all church leaders by articulating the vision of the church and focusing the work of the whole congregation toward the accomplishment of that vision.

The Senior Pastor shall work with staff and ministry team leaders on the planning and implementing of programs that help further the mission and vision of Grace United Methodist Church.

**BP 1.3.1 Safe Gatherings:** The Senior Pastor shall ensure that all staff and volunteers that work with children under the age of 18 years of age adhere to the “Grace United Methodist Church Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Safety Policy.” This includes ensuring that the backgrounds of all staff and volunteers are properly checked.

The Senior Pastor shall ensure that the “Grace United Methodist Church Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults Safety Policy” is updated/renewed on an annual basis.

**BP 1.3.2 Ministry Management:** The Senior Pastor shall ensure that systems and ministries are in place to effectively move people into a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ through study and service. The Senior Pastor shall order all ministries around the mission statement. The Senior Pastor shall manage all staff/ministry leaders, who in turn empower and train the laity to help accomplish this mission.

### **BP 1.4 SENIOR PASTOR - STAFF RELATIONS STATEMENT**

The Senior Pastor is directly responsible for the staff. The Senior Pastor directs and orders the staff for fruitful ministry. The Senior Pastor is primarily responsible and held accountable for the staff’s overall job performance.

**BP 1.4.1 Hiring/Termination of Staff:** The Senior Pastor shall hire and terminate staff in a manner consistent with goals and budgets approved by the Governing Council. The Senior Pastor shall execute all major staff decisions in accordance with due process as defined in the Grace United Methodist Church Personnel Policies, and in collaboration with the member(s) of the Governing Council designated to address staff issues.

**BP 1.4.2 Job Descriptions:** The Senior Pastor shall develop and maintain, in concert with the Governing Council and staff, appropriate job descriptions.

**BP 1.4.3 Personnel Policies** - The Senior Pastor shall operate with concise personnel policies that clarify rules for staff, provide for effective handling of grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions such as nepotism, illegal discrimination or other illegal conduct, and grossly preferential treatment for personal reasons.

**BP 1.4.4 Notice** - The Senior Pastor shall acquaint staff with their rights according to these principles.

**BP 1.4.5 Annual Review** – The Senior Pastor is responsible for the annual review for all staff, whether conducted by the Senior Pastor or the appropriate responsible supervisor for the staff member.

**BP 1.4.6 Major Staff Issue:** Any major staff issue shall be brought by the Senior Pastor to the member(s) of the Governing Council designated to address staff issues, and if necessary, shall come before the entire Governing Council.

**BP 1.4.7 Grievance against the Senior Pastor:** If a staff person has a grievance with the Senior Pastor, and after having tried to reconcile the issue directly with the Senior Pastor, the Senior Pastor shall not prevent him or her from bringing their grievance to the Chairperson of the Governing Council for appropriate review. If necessary, the Chairperson shall bring the issue before the Governing Council. The Senior Pastor shall be notified by the Chairperson of the official grievance brought before the Governing Council. The Governing Council shall implement a just resolution for the staff person and Senior Pastor. The Governing Council shall consult with the Coastal Bend District Superintendent for guidance through this process as necessary.

## **BP 1.5 SENIOR PASTOR - COUNCIL RELATIONS STATEMENT**

The Senior Pastor is held accountable by the Governing Council to ensure that these Boundary Principles are upheld and implemented.

**BP 1.5.1 The Governing Council as a Discipleship Atmosphere:** The Senior Pastor shall create a discipling atmosphere at the Governing Council level, ensuring that every Governing Council member, including the Senior Pastor, is growing in their devotion to Jesus Christ. This includes, but is not limited to, including in each Governing Council meeting a devotional and/or book study, worship or prayer activity.

**BP 1.5.2 Governing Council Meetings:** The Senior Pastor and Chairperson shall ensure that meetings are focused on material that does not create a micro-managing atmosphere by the Governing Council, but rather allows the Governing Council to think strategically about the future of Grace United Methodist Church. All normal Governing Council meetings shall be open meetings for congregational members to observe if they wish. It is preferred that observers notify the Senior Pastor or Chairperson in advance of their intention to address the Council and for

the Senior Pastor or Chairperson to communicate this to the Governing Council prior to the meeting. Governing Council meetings shall only be closed meetings when the Governing Council must go into an Executive Session (this includes, but is not limited to conversations about staffing issues, staff salaries, and the annual review of the Senior Pastor).

**BP 1.5.3 Communication and Support to the Governing Council:** The Senior Pastor shall communicate with the Governing Council in a manner to keep them fully informed and supported in their work.

**BP 1.5.4 Governing Council Training:** The Senior Pastor and Chairperson shall ensure that Governing Council members are fully aware of their responsibilities and roles. They shall ensure appropriate training for Governing Council members.

**BP 1.5.5 Senior Pastor Succession:** The Senior Pastor shall support the denominational rules of The Book of Discipline governing the succession of pastors and make sure the Governing Council is familiar with the process and any issues and processes the Senior Pastor may be involved in at the time of succession.

**BP 1.5.6 Accountability:** The Senior Pastor shall be held accountable for fruit-bearing ministry by the Governing Council, and managing the effectiveness of all staff and ministry leaders. A detailed accountability structure is outlined in the Accountability Principles.

## ARTICLE 3: ACCOUNTABILITY PRINCIPLES (AP)

*Defining for the Chairperson the standards to uphold for enforcing the integrity and fulfillment of the Governing Council's process*

### **AP 1.0 Comprehensive Accountability Statement**

The responsibility of the Governing Council before God, and on behalf of the unchurched in our community and members of Grace United Methodist Church, is to ensure that Grace United Methodist Church, through the leadership of its Senior Pastor, (i) achieves the fulfillment of the Mission Principles, and (ii) satisfies the Boundary Principles.

### **AP 1.1 Governing Council Code of Conduct**

On an annual basis the members of the Governing Council shall sign the Governing Council Covenant (see Appendix 2) as a means to govern their own spiritual and leadership development, as well as to ensure that members of the Governing Council are maintaining a life consistent with the pursuit of holiness of heart and life.

### **AP 1.2 Disciplining the Process of the Governing Council**

The Governing Council shall govern under the following guidelines:

- maintaining an outward vision rather than internal preoccupation;
- encouraging diversity in viewpoints;
- strategic leadership more than administrative detail;
- creating and maintaining clear distinctions between the roles of

- the Governing Council and the staff;
- collective decision making;
- emphasizing the future rather than the past or present;
- being proactive rather than reactive.

### **AP 1.3 Responsibility of the Chairperson**

The Chairperson shall prepare and coordinate the meeting agenda with the Senior Pastor. The Chairperson shall communicate in advance to the Governing Council regarding meeting times and locations. The Chairperson enforces the integrity and fulfillment of the Governing Council's process including the monitoring of the Senior Pastor's performance. The Chairperson is authorized to use a reasonable interpretation of the Accountability Principles as she or he acts to ensure the integrity of the Governing Council's process.

### **AP 1.4 Responsibility of the Recording Secretary**

There shall always be a designated Recording Secretary, either through Charge or Church Conference election or designation by the Council. The Recording Secretary is to maintain accurate minutes of meetings, as well as ensure that Governing Council materials are documented and stored in the appropriate manner. The Recording Secretary shall ensure that copies of the Governing Council minutes are available to any member of Grace United Methodist Church.

### **AP 1.5 Roles and Responsibilities of the Governing Council**

In order to comply with the standards set forth in The Book of Discipline and as approved by the Charge Conference and in concert with OP 1.9, the Governing Council, upon nomination by the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development and election by the Charge/Church Conference, shall provide for the following roles for Council members:

- Chairperson
- Senior Pastor
- Lay Leader
- Recording Secretary
- 3 Trustee Reps – oversee matters of facility management
- 3 Finance Reps – oversee financial policy governance, budgeting, and other fiscal matters
- 3 SPRC Reps – oversee Personnel Policy governance, as well as the Senior Pastor's accountability

**AP 1.5.1 Single Governance Body.** Although these subgroups are identified to "specialize" in preparing matters to come before the Governing Council, when taking action as Church Council, Staff-Parish Relations, Finance, or Trustees, the entire Governing Council acts as a "committee of the whole." Therefore it is understood that as a voting member of the Governing Council the Senior Pastor is a voting member of the Board of Trustees, according to ¶ 2525 of The Book of Discipline.

**AP 1.5.2 Church Feedback and Assessment** - The Governing Council will collect input and feedback from members, attendees, guests, non-returning guests and

persons unconnected to Grace United Methodist Church in order to better understand their needs. The Governing Council will incorporate this feedback to better help govern Grace United Methodist Church.

**AP 1.5.3 Use of Governing Council Teams:** Governing Council Teams, if used, shall be assigned so as to reinforce the wholeness of the Governing Council's job and never to interfere with the delegation from the Governing Council to the Senior Pastor or with the work of the staff.

**AP 1.6 Responsibility of the Senior Pastor for Visionary Leadership**

The Senior Pastor has the responsibility, authority, and accountability to serve as the primary leader of the church at every level: congregation, staff, and Governing Council. If a question arises with regard to the Guiding Principles of the church, the Senior Pastor shall defer to the judgment of the Governing Council.

**AP 1.7 Monitoring the Performance of the Pastor**

The Governing Council's sole official connection to the operating organization of the church, its achievement, and conduct shall be through the Senior Pastor.

**AP 1.7.1 Unity of Control:** Only decisions of the Governing Council are binding on the Senior Pastor.

**AP 1.7.2 Accountability of the Senior Pastor:** The Senior Pastor is the Governing Council's only link to operational achievement and conduct, so that all authority and accountability of staff, as far as the Governing Council is concerned, is considered the authority and accountability of the Senior Pastor.

**AP 1.7.3 Delegation to the Senior Pastor:** The Governing Council shall instruct the Senior Pastor through these written principles and other guiding materials that prescribe the mission to be achieved and establish appropriate boundaries, allowing the Senior Pastor, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Governing Council (see AP 1.3) to use any reasonable interpretation of these principles.

**AP 1.7.4 Performance of the Senior Pastor:** Evaluation and monitoring of the Senior Pastor's job performance shall be with respect to the Senior Pastor's annual goals; the accomplishment of the Mission Principles; and conformity with the Boundary Principles.

**AP 1.7.5 Annual Goals of the Senior Pastor:** The Senior Pastor shall be required to establish measurable goals in conjunction with the Governing Council each year that address the accomplishment of the Mission Principles.

**AP 1.7.6 Annual Review of the Senior Pastor:** Each year, the Governing Council shall review the results achieved by the Senior Pastor on each of the annual goals. A merit increase or cost of living increase shall be considered based upon whether the Senior Pastor's goals have been exceptionally exceeded, marginally met, or have not been met. If goals

have not been met, the Governing Council may also support a performance plan with six-month goals to boost effectiveness to an acceptable level. This performance plan shall be made in consultation with the District Superintendent.

## ARTICLE 4: ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES (OP)

*Defining how the church will be organized for optimal operational efficiency and effectiveness*

### **OP 1.0 Comprehensive Operational Statement**

The church shall be organized in such manner as to promote efficient and effective decision-making with appropriate boundaries for checks and balances and appropriate levels of accountability.

### **OP 1.1 The Head of the Church**

Jesus Christ shall always be the Head of the Church and the Church shall always be the Body of Christ. All church leaders are to keep their eyes focused on Jesus Christ.

### **OP 1.2 The Role of the Senior Pastor**

The Senior Pastor shall function in the role of President or Chief Executive officer of Grace United Methodist Church. Subject to the provisions of these Guiding Principles and **The Book of Discipline**, the Senior Pastor shall have the authority to execute operational contracts as long as it does not contradict BP 1.2.2 or BP 1.2.6.

### **OP 1.3 The Role of the Governing Council**

The Governing Council shall function in the role of the Board of Directors or as the Trustees of the church. Except as shall be specifically delegated, all legal authority shall vest in the Governing Council and no person may legally bind the church to any obligation without the prior approval of the Governing Council. The Governing Council shall act on behalf of the church in accordance with **The Book of Discipline** and in compliance with these Guiding Principles. In the event of a conflict between these Guiding Principles and **The Book of Discipline**, **The Book of Discipline** shall take precedence.

***OP 1.3.1 Chairperson's Contractual Authority:*** The Chairperson shall have authority to legally bind the church on contracts and obligations upon approval of the Governing Council, subject to **The Book of Discipline**.

***OP 1.3.2 Contractual Authority of the Subcommittee Chair for the Board of Trustees:*** The Chair of the Board of Trustees Subcommittee shall have authority to legally bind the church on contracts and obligations pertaining to the real property of Grace United Methodist Church with the timely approval of the Governing Council, subject to **The Book of Discipline**, and within Grace United Methodist Church budget parameters.

### **OP 1.4 Eligibility to be a Member of the Governing Council**

Individuals proposed to be members of the Governing Council shall be a members of

the church, shall not be an immediate family member of the pastor(s), employees, or other Governing Council members, and shall meet the qualifications set out in Appendix 1.

### **OP 1.5 Makeup of the Governing Council**

The Governing Council shall consist of 12 lay members and the Senior Pastor. For specific roles, see AP 1.5.

**OP 1.5.1 Term Limits:** Terms are defined as three years. Governing Council members shall not serve more than six consecutive years.

### **OP 1.6 Voting**

All members of the Governing Council, including the Senior Pastor and the Chairperson, shall have voting privileges.

**OP 1.6.1 Parameters:** A quorum the Governing Council shall be defined as eight (8) members. A two-thirds (2/3) vote in the affirmative of those who are voting shall be required for passage. Governing Council members may vote in person, by email or by proxy.

**OP 1.6.2 Acton in Writing without Meeting:** Any action that could be taken by the Governing Council at a meeting may be taken without a meeting with the affirmative written vote or approval of nine (9) members of the Governing Council. Any such action requested shall be mailed or emailed to all members of the Governing Council and responses can be by mail or email. The Recording Secretary shall keep such responses the same as minutes of a meeting.

### **OP 1.7 Removal from the Governing Council**

Upon the recommendation and approval of the Governing Council, a member of the Governing Council may be removed as a member for cause. In this case, "cause" is defined to include, but not be limited to, excessive absenteeism from meetings or other functions of the Governing Council; failure to take an active role in Governing Council functions; or any other action or inaction deemed to be detrimental to the accomplishment of the Mission Principles.

### **OP 1.8 Governing Council Vacancies**

Any vacancy on the Governing Council whether caused by voluntary or involuntary circumstances shall be filled by the Governing Council following OP 1.4. The person selected to fill the vacancy shall serve for the full, unexpired term of the member being replaced.

### **OP 1.9 Administrative Committees under Paragraph 258 of The Book of Discipline**

The Governing Council shall assume and perform all duties and functions of the Administrative Committees that are set forth in Paragraph 258 of The Book of Discipline. The Council may take on the authority and duties of any of these committees as described in The Book of Discipline.

**OP 1.9.1 The Subgroups of the Governing Council are:**

Committee on Staff Parish Relations (SPRC)

Committee on Finance

Board of Trustees

Any other teams determined to be necessary by a majority of the Governing Council

**OP 2.0 Changes to Governing Council Guiding Principles**

Any revision, update, addition, or amendment to these Guiding Principles deemed necessary or appropriate for the efficient and effective operation of the Governing Council, may be made upon motion by any member of the Governing Council with subsequent approval by a three fourths (3/4) vote of the current membership in the affirmative.

# APPENDIX 1

## **Qualifications to be nominated as an elected officer**

***(Governing Council, Lay Member of Annual Conference, Committee on Nominations & Leadership Development)***

- **Fully and enthusiastically committed to our mission** to *“make new disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”* A crucial piece of this is a recognition that the first priority of our mission is to reach others outside the church, then to equip and care for each other within the church.
  
- **Active in the life of the congregation**
  - In regular worship attendance, participation in a small group or class
  - In serving in a ministry according to his or her passion and giftedness
  - In giving regularly and significantly to support the church financially
  
- **In serving in the elected capacity**
  - To be faithful in attending the meetings and participating in accomplishing the tasks of the group to which elected.
  - To be supportive of the pastor and staff.
  - To have a cooperative and collaborative attitude toward others with whom one serves, and to be respectful and supportive of the leaders and teams of other ministry areas.

# APPENDIX 2



## **Governing Council Covenant**

As a faithful disciple of Jesus who has answered the call of leadership by serving on the Grace United Methodist Church Governing Council, I make the following covenant.

As a leader of Grace United Methodist Church, I commit to the following:

1. To live a life of holiness by growing in my love and devotion to Jesus Christ through daily discipleship practices.
2. To love and glorify God through my life and service in and outside of Grace United Methodist Church.
3. To always seek what is best in fulfilling Grace United Methodist Church's mission, 'Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World' and when necessary, putting my own personal preferences aside in order to accomplish that mission.
4. To enthusiastically support our pastor(s) and staff by refusing to micromanage their work, but to hold the Senior Pastor accountable to the mission and vision as outlined in The Guiding Principles of the Governing Council.
5. To support and encourage the work of the laity by calling all members to serve in the life of the church.
6. To actively participate in various ministries outside of the Governing Council meetings.
7. To maintain total confidentiality regarding the contents of the Governing Council that have been deemed as confidential.
8. To take the initiative to resolve directly any conflict that might arise between myself and other members of the church. Even in times of disagreement, I

treat all people with kindness, gentleness, and respect.

9. To pray daily for fellow council members, pastors, staff, and members of the church.
10. To actively participate in leadership development opportunities throughout the year.
11. To welcome open communication, constructive criticism and courteous disagreement as part of healthy decision making.
12. To fully support all Governing Council decisions outside of meetings.
13. To make every effort to faithfully attend and fully participate in Governing Council meetings.
14. To continually fulfill my membership vows by generously giving of my time, talents, gifts (including working toward tithing), service, and witness, as well as calling upon my sisters and brothers in Christ to fulfill their membership vows.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_