



1800 Bowes Road † Elgin IL 60123

CONSTITUTION

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Our purpose is to:

- Glorify our Savior, Jesus Christ and our Father, God
- Lead and guide the unsaved into a relationship with Jesus Christ
- Disciple Christians in a growing relationship with the Lord
- Proclaim the gospel locally, regionally, nationally and world wide
- Make disciples locally, regionally, nationally and world wide
- Encourage all believers through sound teaching of the Word of God
- Promote the worship of the Lord, our God
see Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Defend the faith with knowledge, passion and commitment
see Acts 14:27; Galatians 1:2; Titus 1:5-11; Hebrews 10:23-25

Article 1: “Scripture”

We believe in the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life. (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21)

Article 2: “God”

We believe in one God, eternally existing in three divine persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2)

Article 3: “Person and Work of Christ”

- We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true man, without sin.
(Matthew 1:18-25; Colossians 1:15; Luke 3:21-38; Luke 2:4-12)
- We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a perfect representative and substitutionary sacrifice. All who believe in Him are justified based on His shed blood as payment and atonement for our sins.
(1 John 1:7; Ephesians 1:7-8; 1 Peter 2:21-24; John 14:6; 3:16)
- We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into Heaven, and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate. (Hebrews 7:25, 4:14; Matthew 28; John 20:6-31; Acts 1:9-11)

Article 4: “Person and Work of the Holy Spirit”

- We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person and proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is therefore eternal, and of the same essence, majesty, and glory with the Father and the Son. We believe, therefore, that the Holy Spirit is truly God.
(Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:4-6)
- We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person who by His power convicts the world concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment; and that He is the supernatural Agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into the body (church) of Christ, indwelling them, and sealing them unto the day of redemption.
(John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Ephesians 1:13-14)
- We believe He is the divine Teacher who guides believers into all truth; it is the privilege and duty of all the saved to be filled with the Spirit.
(John 16:13; 1 John 2:20, 27; Ephesians 5:18)

- We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, according to His will, on behalf of the sick and afflicted, in the power of the Holy Spirit.
(John 15:7; 1 John 5:14-15; James 5:14-15)

Article 5: “Satan”

We believe that Satan is a fallen angel, the author of sin, and the cause of the fall, that he is the open and declared enemy of God and man, that he shall be eternally punished in the lake of fire.

(Job 1:6-7; Isaiah 14:12-17; Matthew 4:2-11; Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10)

Article 6: “Creation, Marriage, and Fall of Mankind”

We believe in the literal understanding of creation as recorded in Genesis; that God created human beings on the sixth day of a seven day creation week, male and female, in His own image; that Adam and Eve were created with distinctive roles before the fall, with the man exercising loving leadership and the woman exercising respectful submission; Adam and Eve were made to complement each other as an exclusive pattern of biblical marriage of one man and one woman.

(Genesis 1:1-27, 2:4-25, Ephesians 5:22-33)

We believe Adam sinned, and thereby incurred, not only physical death, but also spiritual death, which is separation from God; all human beings are born with a sinful nature, and in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed.

(Genesis 1:26-27;

Exodus 20:11; Isaiah 53:6; Romans 5:12; Romans 3:10; Romans 3:23)

Article 7: “Salvation”

We believe the sole condition for receiving eternal life is faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, who died a substitutionary death on the cross to pay for mankind’s sins, and rose bodily from the dead. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit, and thereby become Children of God.

(1 Peter 1:23;

John 3:15-16; John 17:3; John 3:1-7; 2 Corinthians 5:17; John 1:11-12)

We believe eternal life is a free gift based on Christ’s death for the sins of the whole world, and that we are saved by grace through faith in Christ.

(Ephesians 2:8-9; John 3:16; Acts 16:31)

We believe that those born again possess two natures, and that the new nature may be victorious over the old nature through the power of the Holy Spirit, but that eradication of the old nature is unscriptural.

(Ephesians 4:22-24; Romans 8:12-13)

We believe that those born again are saved with an eternal salvation, are kept by God’s power and are thus secure in Christ forever, and the ultimate goal of the Holy Spirit’s work in the believer’s life is to grow toward spiritual maturity reflected in consistent Christlike behavior and attitudes.

(John 6:37-39; John 10:28; Romans 8:38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Philippians 1:6)

Article 8: “Ordinances”

Baptism: We believe that the Christian Believer’s baptism is the immersion in water "in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

(Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12; Acts 8:35-39)

Communion: We believe the Lord’s Supper is a memorial service and is set forth in a sacred and symbolic manner of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ on our behalf. The elements of the communion service are not literally the body and blood of Christ, nor do they contain His flesh and blood, but are symbolic of Christ’s body sacrificed on the cross and his blood shed for the remission of our sin. Participation is open to all believers in Christ that are in good fellowship with God.-The Lord’s Supper will be commemorated monthly (typically the first Sunday).

(I Corinthians 11:23-24)

Article 9: “Second Coming”

We believe in the Blessed Hope, the personal imminent pre-tribulational and pre-millennial coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for His redeemed ones; and His subsequent return to earth with His saints to establish His millennial Kingdom.

(Acts 1:11; John 14:3; Revelation 22:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Titus 2:11-13)

Article 10: “Eternal State”

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the just to everlasting blessedness with God in heaven, and the everlasting punishment of the lost separated from God in the lake of fire.

(1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:25-29)

ARTICLE 1: "THE NAME"

The name of the church shall be "Grace Evangelical Church – Elgin, Illinois."

ARTICLE 2: "COMPOSITION"

The Purpose Statement, Doctrine Statement, and By-Laws of Grace Evangelical Church are made a part of this Constitution.

ARTICLE 3: "MEMBERSHIP"

3.1: Any person who has received Christ as their Savior and give assurance of their willingness to abide by the Constitution of this Church, shall be eligible for membership.

3.2: A person may be received into membership upon confession of faith, restatement of faith, or by letter of transfer from churches of like faith. Each person will attend a class on church membership, share their testimony with the Elder Team, and upon approval will be welcomed into membership.

3.3: Members are to live according to the Purpose Statement and Covenant.

3.4: Church membership will be reviewed annually by the Elder Team. A member may be placed on inactive status by the Elders based on that individual's involvement in church activities for the preceding six to twelve months, or more. A member may be removed from church membership by the Elder Team if they have been on the Inactive list for more than six months or if they are under church discipline (see Article 6.2).

3.5: Members on the Inactive List will not be entitled to hold office or vote in church matters.

3.6: Members on the Inactive List may be restored to full membership standing by action of the Elder Team.

3.7: The name of any member removed from the membership list shall be reported at the Church Business Meeting in January.

3.8: Letters transferring membership to other churches will only be granted those who desire to unite with churches of like faith.

3.9: Covenant: Since I have received Christ as my Savior and have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into one body of which Christ is the head, I unite with the Grace Evangelical Church family. I will commit myself to God and to the church members by:

1. Protecting the unity of my church by:
 - Walking together in Christian love
 - Refusing to gossip or listen to gossip
 - Respectfully following the leadership
 - Striving for harmony with the members of the church
2. Sharing the responsibility of my church by:
 - Praying for its growth
 - Praying for its members and leaders
 - Inviting the unchurched to attend
 - Warmly welcoming those who visit
 - Watching over one another in love
3. Serving in the ministry of my church by:
 - Discovering and using my gifts and talents as part of this local church body
 - Striving to be more equipped to serve faithfully with a servant's heart
 - Seek to maintain a regular time with the Lord of personal bible study and prayer
 - Teaching my children (and others) the knowledge of Christ, to love and serve Him
 - Attending faithfully and regularly
 - Living a godly life, through and with my family, with God's strength, grace and help
 - Financially giving regularly
 - Striving to have a reputation without blame

ARTICLE 4: "CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP"

4.1: The government of this Church is vested in its membership, executed through the Church leadership comprised of the Elder Team, Deacon Team, and Deaconness Team. These teams will endeavor to work closely together to achieve the work of the church, the Church, and the Kingdom. Each team has a vital role to fulfill, with each one tasked to accomplish His work through their work. The Bible spells out the lead role for the church is through the Elders, as such, the Deacon and Deaconness Teams will fulfill their service under the guidance of the Elder Team.

4.2: A. There will be an Elder Team consisting of four (4) or more elected non-staff Elders. The Lead Pastor will serve as an unelected member of the Elder Team. Other Pastors may serve as an Elder, as determined by the Elder Team and elected by the membership at a church business meeting. Staff Pastors will not exceed one third of the Elder Team.

B. There will be a Deacon Team consisting of five (5) or more elected Deacons.

C. There will be a Deaconness Team consisting of four (4) or more elected Deaconness'.

4.3: The Church leadership team shall:

A. Not encumber with loan, transfer, sell or purchase any real estate for the Church except by express authorization conveyed through a vote of the membership present at a church meeting.

B. Handle and consider suggestions and recommendations upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the Church.

C. Perform such other duties as may be defined by this Constitution.

4.4 Each leadership team (Elder, Deacon, Deaconness) will annually select a chairperson to lead their team (from within its elective leadership). They will also appoint a person from their team to record minutes of all meetings they hold. The Elder chairman will serve as the lead person for all church meetings and will select a person to record minutes of those meetings. Each leadership team will meet at least once per month with personal reporting being made to the Elder Team following those meetings. The entire leadership team will meet at least once a quarter as determined by the Elder Team.

4.5 The Terms of office for elected officers will be three years. All first time elected officers, after one year of service, will be evaluated by the team they serve with (following a positive team response and approval by the Elder Team, their term will continue for the remainder of their elected term). Three year terms are preferred, however, terms may be adjusted (to one or two year terms) to balance the number of team members being elected each year.

4.6 No one person shall hold more than one elective office concurrently.

4.7 Each leadership team shall endeavor to reach consensus in all decisions. If a vote is necessary, the deciding factor in a Church leadership meeting (monthly or additional, as needed), shall meet or exceed 80% of each teams members, present and voting.

ARTICLE 5: "PASTORS – DUTIES"

5.1: The Lead Pastor will have general oversight of the spiritual life of the Church, regular services and administration of the ordinances of the church. He shall serve as a member of the Elder Team and shall be an ex-officio member of all committees connected with the Church or any of its organizations. He will conscientiously perform such duties as may be arranged between him and the Elder Team. If at any time his morals, personal beliefs, preaching or teaching shall not be in full accord with the Constitution of this Church, his services as Pastor shall be terminated.

5.2: Any Pastor of this church shall perform his duties as may be designated by the Elder Team.

5.3: A Pastor may be called, upon approval of the membership, after a recommendation of:

A committee appointed by the Elder Team and approval by the Elder Team.
(see Article 10).

5.4: The service of a Pastor may be terminated for just cause by the Elder Team. This prayerful decision may include consultation from the membership and will done fairly and impartially by the Elder Team. The Elder Team will communicate appropriately, fairly and timely to the congregation regarding such a decision.

5.5: Pastors shall serve until their pastorate is terminated by resignation or by request of the Elder Team. Pastors shall endeavor to give a notice thirty days (minimum) before resignation of his services. In the event the service of a Pastor or staff person be terminated immediately, the church shall endeavor to continue paid compensation for thirty days.

ARTICLE 6: "ELDERS – DUTIES"

6.1: The Elder Team shall be responsible with the Pastors for the spiritual welfare of the Church.

- They will assist in ministering the ordinances of the Church and shall make provisions for them.
- They will direct the examination and reception of applicants for Church membership and pass upon their fitness.
- They will assist in visiting the sick and sorrowing of the membership, follow up with those whose attendance is infrequent and endeavor to remedy any spiritual weakness in the lives of its members.
- They shall handle grievances upon the part of any member or organization affiliated with the Church.
- They shall faithfully perform all other duties designated by this Constitution or pertaining to their office.
- They shall endeavor by God's grace to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in this Constitution for their particular office, and especially as found in the Word of God. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9)

6.2 The Elder Team will oversee church discipline to correct disorder, maintain sound faith, build up and restore believers. Discipline shall be administered in a spirit of mourning, gentleness, love, and humility. The reasons for discipline may include: unrepentant sinful behavior (e.g. sexual immorality, covetousness, idolatry, abusive language, drunkenness, swindling, and others), lack of submission, and doctrinal deviation or heresy. The methods of discipline can include: restriction of ministry privileges, restriction from communion, reproof, admonishment, and separation or removal from the church (as a final step). Members may not remove their names from membership when in the process of church discipline. (Galatians 6:1, Matthew 18:15-20, and 1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

6.3 The Elder Team will:

- A. Have oversight of the membership and congregation in its dealing with Pastors, employees, affiliated organizations (their officers and branch works) and any outside persons, or organizations.
- B. Coordinate, oversee and help direct the Church Leadership team.
- C. Have authority to appoint individuals or committees for the transaction of its business.
- D. Have authority to call church business meetings for the purpose of instruction or information for the congregation and recommending such actions as call for a vote of the membership, and receive advice or instruction from the Congregation.
- E. In case of vacancies in elected offices in the Church leadership, will fill the vacancy at their discretion.
- F. Annually approve the Chairperson(s) for the following standing committees; Missionary, Music, Ushers, Publicity, Fellowship, Christian Education, and any other committees necessary either permanently or temporarily, after recommendation from the Nominating Committee. The Committees' duties shall be defined in writing by the Church Leadership Team.

6.4 Any officer's service may be terminated for just cause by the Elders, after a fair and impartial hearing conducted under the supervision of the Elder Team.

6.5 Any officer or employee of this church shall perform such duties as may be designated by the Elder Team, or the authorized representative.

ARTICLE 7: "DEACONS – DUTIES"

7.1 The Deacon Team will serve the church and will oversee the physical properties and finances of the Church. They will assist the Elder Team as needed for ministry. They shall by God's grace endeavor to live and serve in full conformity with the standards set forth in this Constitution and especially found in the Word of God. (1 Timothy 3:8-13)

7.2 The Deacon Team will have authority to pay all bills such as salaries, wages, utilities, supplies, maintenance and repairs. Non-budgeted, unusual expenses exceeding one percent and up to three percent of the entire Church Budget, must be approved by the Deacon Team and Elder Team. Non-budgeted, unusual expenses exceeding three percent of the entire Church Budget, must be approved by the Church Membership, prior to payment, at a Church Meeting. Any expenditure exceeding \$2,000.00 (budgeted), or \$1,000 (non-budgeted), must be approved by the Deacon Team prior to purchase.

7.3 Any line item that exceeds 110% of the yearly approved budget (\$1,000 budgeted line item minimum), must have all expenditures beyond that amount approved by the Deacon Team, and submitted in writing to the Elder Team for approval, prior to purchase and payment.

7.4 The Deacon Team will annually prepare a budget, to be approved by the Elder Team, then provided to the membership, at least one week prior to the meeting, for approval by the membership.

7.5 The Deacon Team, with the support of the Treasurer and other assistants as authorized by the Elder Team, will arrange for the receiving, counting, and crediting in their proper form, all offerings and money received by the church (per Deacon Policy, at least two people). The Deacon Team will assure those funds are deposited with reasonable promptness in the financial institution as approved by the Elder Team.

ARTICLE 8: "TREASURER – DUTIES"

8.1 The Treasurer will be responsible for:

The accounting of all offerings and money received and disbursed by the Church (preferably in electronic form).

Furnishing receipts to those on whose behalf the funds have been received.

Drawing checks against funds as directed by the Deacon Team (see Article 7.2) or Elder Team (for benevolent needs).

Providing a monthly financial statement showing the true cash account status of all funds (held by the church), which will be approved by the Deacon Team, and then presented to the Elder Team for review (preferably in person).

8.2 The Treasurer's records will at all times be available to the Deacon Team and Elder Team and will be submitted to audit at least once a year as directed by the Deacon Team.

8.3 The Treasurer will prepare a financial statement showing the true cash account status of all funds for the fiscal year of the Church. This statement will be presented at the Church Business Meeting in January.

8.4 In the event the Treasurer is unable to perform the required duties, or there is a vacancy in this office, the duties of the Treasurer may be taken care of by any person authorized by the Elder Team until action is taken by in supplying a substitute. In the event of a change in Treasurer, an audit shall be taken before the new Treasurer shall assume responsibility.

ARTICLE 9: "DEACONNESS – DUTIES"

9.1: The Deaconess Team will serve the church and will oversee the functioning of the women's ministries. They will ensure those ministries are meeting the spiritual, physical, emotional, and friendship needs of the women in the church. (see Titus 2:3-5).

ARTICLE 10: "STANDING COMMITTEES"

10.1 Committee members shall be recommended by the appointed Chairperson for annual approval by the Elder Team. Committee members' names are encouraged to be submitted for approval, to the Elder Team, within two months of the chairpersons' approval. The Committees' duties shall be defined in writing by the Church Leadership Team.

10.2 The Missionary Committee shall submit to the membership for approval, after prior approval by the Elder Team, the names of proposed missionaries the Church shall support on a regular basis. Approval of the membership present is necessary for Church support (See Article 12.12). Missionary support will continue unless directed otherwise by the Elder Team and approved by the membership, by vote, at a church meeting.

10.3 The Nominating Committee will be elected by the membership present and will consist of: one elder, one deacon, one deaconesses, and one man and two women from the membership at large. The nominees from the membership will be presented by the Elder Team prior to the meeting. Members are encouraged to suggest candidates to the Elder Team for service on the Nominating Committee. The Lead Pastor (or staff member in the absence of a Lead Pastor) is a non-elected member of this committee. The chairman shall be selected from the elective members of the committee. Members of the Church are encouraged to suggest candidates to the Nominating Committee for consideration.

The candidates for elective offices shall be selected by a Nominating Committee, approved by the Elder Team, and elected by a vote of the membership.

The Nominating committee will, to the best of its ability, select persons well qualified, suited and capable for each office. Each person nominated will be a member of the Church and reflect a good testimony and spiritual maturity commensurate with the responsibilities which he/she will be given.

Each Nominee will affirm that they are:

Willing to serve in the office to which they have been nominated and they support the Constitution and the operation and testimony of the Church.

Each Nominee shall be agreed upon unanimously by the members of the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee shall submit the names of candidate(s) for elective offices in ballot form to be individually approved by a yes/no vote by the membership. The Nominating Committee will recommend names of chairpersons for standing committees to the Elder Team for approval.

ARTICLE 11. "CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS"

11.1 A Church Business Meeting to provide annual reports of the ministries shall be held during the month of January. The date of this meeting is to be determined by the Elder Team and announced to the congregation at least two weeks preceding the meeting. All committees, teams and officers will provide an annual report to the membership. Organized classes or groups will be encouraged to submit written annual reports. Also, such other business as may be necessary shall be transacted.

11.2 A Church Business Meeting to approve the annual budget will be held during the month of November or December. The dates of this meeting are to be determined by the Elder Team and announced to the membership at least two weeks preceding the meeting. The fiscal year of this Church shall begin on January 1st and end on the 31st day of December.

11.3 A Church Business Meeting to select a Nominating Committee will be held during the month of March or April. The date of this meeting is to be determined by the Elder Team and announced to the membership at least two weeks preceding the meeting.

11.4 A Church Business Meeting to approve church officers shall be held during the months of May or June. The date of this meeting is to be determined by the Elder Team and announced to the membership at least two weeks preceding the meeting. The Nominating Committee will submit its report to the membership for action.

11.5 All officers and committee chairpersons will serve until their successor is elected or appointed.

11.6 Any regular or called Church Business Meeting of the membership may constitute a meeting for the transaction of business, provided announcement of said meeting be given at all regularly scheduled services at least one week prior to said meeting.

11.7 Upon the written request of twenty-five percent of the members with power to vote, the Elder Team shall call a special church business meeting. This meeting and its purpose will be announced as provided in Article 11.6 and convened within one month after filing the request with the Elder Team.

11.8 A quorum for the transaction of business shall be the members present.

11.9 The minimum voting age shall be 18 years.

11.10 All voting shall be by secret ballot unless waived, by the members present.

11.11 Any parliamentary question not covered by this Constitution, in the conduct of business meetings, will be decided by the Elder Team (referring to the latest edition of Robert Rules of Order as needed).

11.12 Membership approval during Church Business Meetings must meet or exceed the following criteria (members present and voting):

Election of pastoral staff - 90%

Election of church officers - 75%

All other decisions - 75%

ARTICLE 12: "ORDINATION"

12.1: When in the judgment of the Elder Team, a person in this membership is called to the Christian ministry, it shall be within the power of the Elder Team to call and conduct a council for ordination. The Ordaining Council shall thoroughly examine all applicants for ordination as to their call to the Christian ministry, education, Christian experience, reputation, character, doctrinal belief, and demonstrated efficiency in Christian service.

12.2: The following may be ordained to the ministry:

1. One who has served at least six months as a Pastor or in definite Christian work in such manner as to convey reasonable evidence of God's call to the ministry.
2. One who lives and demonstrates good Christian character as evidenced by the following scriptures:
Romans 12:1-2; 1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9.

12.3: The Elder Team may discipline or revoke the ordination credentials of any minister ordained under this Constitution. The Elder Team will prayerfully conduct an impartial hearing conducted in the ministry of 1 Corinthians 13, if such action is needed.

ARTICLE 13: "POLICY AND PRACTICE"

13.1: Weddings, Marriage Ceremonies, Civil Ceremonies

- A. The church will only host weddings, marriage ceremonies and/or receptions (on our grounds and in our facilities) that are biblical, that is, between one biological man and one biological (unrelated) woman only.
- B. Church staff will only participate in weddings, marriage ceremonies, civil ceremonies and/or receptions that are biblical, that is, between one biological man and one biological (unrelated) woman only.

13.2: Claims, Conflicts, Disagreements, Mediation, Arbitration:

- A. We believe as Christians, that the Bible commands us to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes and conflicts with and within the church (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
- B. It is our policy to avoid legal claims or disputes with or within the church. If such claims or disputes are unavoidable, the church leadership will implement policies to compel claims or disputes to be resolved through private, Christian mediation. If Christian mediation fails, then private, binding Christian arbitration will be the last recourse.
- C. Church employees agree to abide by this resolution process. Church congregants agree to have claims or disputes settled by the Elder Team. Disputes or claims that involve the church, an outside arbitration body will be engaged, using biblical methods, consistent with our doctrine statement.

ARTICLE 14: "DISSOLUTION"

14.1: If, in the Providence of God, the Grace Evangelical Church of Elgin, Illinois, a non-profit Corporation, is dissolved for any reason, the assets of the corporation, real, personal and mixed, shall be divided by the Elder Team at the time of such dissolution, among the non-profit faith missions to which this church is contributing to at the time of dissolution.

ARTICLE 15: "AMENDMENTS"

15.1: This Constitution may be amended by a vote of the members present at any church meeting. All amendments will require the posting and circulation of copies of the proposal (in person or by mail) at least three weeks in advance. All amendments will be approved by the Elder Team prior to presentation to the membership. Such amendments must be reviewed and considered for at least three months by a Constitutional Review Committee. This committee will be established and approved by the Elder Team.