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Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Edward Connor Solicitors Model Church Handbook

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GRACE CHURCH DENBIGH
Church Handbook

We certify this to be the Church Handbook adopted by the members of GRACE CHURCH DENBIGH at a meeting of the members held on the _____[1]

Chair: …… Secretary: ……..

[1] Add the date the Church Handbook was adopted by the first members

As amended in accordance with the provisions of this Church Handbook on:

Date of Revision	Signature of Chair	Signature of Secretary

1. Introduction

Welcome to GRACE CHURCH DENBIGH (the "Church"). This local church is one part of a much wider body of people who are the Church of God, made up of people who recognise Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and who are united to Him and to each other by the Holy Spirit.

We come together as a group of people to help one another - as individuals and as a church - to grow in our Christian faith and to share this with other people: to worship God together, to share teaching from the Bible and personal stories of the amazing things Jesus has done, to encourage one another as we try to live out Jesus' teaching, and to show and tell other people who Jesus is.

When we meet together we learn more about God and Jesus through the Bible; pray together for people, our Church, our local community and the world; provide care and friendship to one another; and reach out to people who do not know Jesus or the importance of recognising who He is, (Acts 2:42, Matthew 28:18-20).

2. Legal Structure

The legal structure of our Church is a 'charitable incorporated organisation' (a "CIO"). We have a Church Constitution which deals with the legal requirements we have to meet as a CIO. Any changes to our Constitution must be registered by the Charity Commission before they come into effect.

Our Constitution was adopted on _____[2] and registered by the Charity Commission on _____[3]. It was last amended on _____[4].

This document is our Church Handbook. It sets out the internal workings of our Church and is based on our understanding of the Bible. It sits alongside our Constitution, and both documents should be read together to understand how the Church operates. This Church Handbook must always be consistent with our Constitution – if it is inconsistent, the Constitution takes precedence.

If there is anything you are unsure about, please speak to the Pastor or one of the Charity Trustees.

3. Our Basis of Faith

Our Basis of Faith sets out the core truths of the Gospel which we believe every true Christian should agree with. Under our Constitution, the charitable purposes of our Church and the activities we carry out must be consistent with our Basis of Faith.

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[2] Add the date the Constitution was adopted by the first members

[3] Add the date the CIO was registered by the Charity Commission

[4] You will need to update the date here each time the Constitution is amended – that is the date the amendments are registered by the Charity Commission not the date the changes are approved by Church Members. You can leave it blank until it is amended for the first time after the CIO has been registered.

Appendix **A** contains our Basis of Faith.

4. Doctrinal Distinctives

Our Church has another statement of beliefs called 'Doctrinal Distinctives'. These set out our Church's position and teaching on certain specific matters as we recognise that genuine Christian believers may take different views.

Appendix **B** contains our Doctrinal Distinctives.

5. Ethical Statements

These statements set out our Church's teaching on ethical matters and explain how our Basis of Faith is worked out practically in day-to-day life.

Appendix **C** contains our Ethical Statements.

6. Church Covenant

Our Church Covenant is a summary of how the members of Grace Church promise to live together as a church family. More importantly, it is a summary of the biblical standard that God would have us live together. Our acceptance of the covenant follows the practice of believers throughout the centuries who have pledged to God and to one another to live out the gospel in community.

Appendix **D** contains our Church Covenant.

7. Becoming and being a member of our Church

If you are a Christian and you think of GRACE CHURCH DENBIGH as your 'spiritual home' then we hope you will demonstrate this formally by becoming a Church Member.

This is a way of showing to other people that you are committed to using your gifts and time to serve in our Church, to being served by other Church Members, and to serving together with them to show Jesus' love to others.

- We ask people to confirm that they agree with our Basis of Faith and our Church Covenant before they can become Church Members.

- We ask people to confirm that they accept our Doctrinal Distinctives as our Church's teaching on these matters. Church Members may hold and discuss a different personal view but are asked not to insist on their own view or to seek to override the Church's teaching on these matters but to work hard at all times to maintain the unity we enjoy in the gospel and in our core beliefs as set out in the Basis of Faith.

- Church Members are to live in a way that is consistent with our Ethical Statements (Appendix C).

Church Members have a particular role in decision-making within our Church, including electing Elders/Deacons/Charity Trustees, agreeing the ways the Church should carry out its mission and its activities and priorities, deciding to appoint staff, and identifying ways of using the Church's resources to further the Kingdom of God.

Appendix **E** explains how you can become a Church Member, what being a Church Member looks like in practice and how Church Membership may come to an end.

8. Leadership of our Church

Jesus Christ Himself is the leader of our Church. Through the Bible and the Holy Spirit, we are guided by Jesus' teaching – both by His words and the insight we are given into how He lived and treated people.

The Lord Jesus also gives us leaders, referred to in this local Church as Elders/Deacons/Charity Trustees. As they themselves seek to follow Jesus they provide an example for others to follow, and the Bible encourages us to imitate the faith that they have. (Hebrews 13:7)

As our leaders watch over our Church, and are accountable to God, the Apostle Paul tells us to submit to the authority God has given them "so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you." (Hebrews 13:17)

The Church's Constitution states that the individuals who hold the following Church Officer roles are the Charity Trustees of our Church:

Elders, Deacons and Elected Charity Trustees.

As Charity Trustees, these individuals have certain legal duties and responsibilities under the law in England and Wales.

Appendix **F** explains how these Church Officers are appointed and how their roles may come to an end. It also explains the other Church Officer roles we have in our Church, in addition to the roles of the Charity Trustees.

9. Church Discipline

As a Church, we are part of the family of God. As with any family, the members of this Church may disagree with one another, or fall into a pattern of behaviour that does not reflect how Jesus has taught us to live. We recognise that we are all sinners and make mistakes and are grateful for God's forgiveness when we confess our sins to Him (1 John 1:8-9).

However, we also recognise that sometimes Church Members may refuse to be reconciled to each other when disputes arise, or to persist in behaviour that is dishonouring to God and the Bible's teaching. In these circumstances, we may sadly have to take the step of removing them from formal Church Membership. This is because such behaviour and lack of repentance may indicate that they are not truly part of the family of God. It can also tempt other Church Members and attendees to follow their example, particularly if their behaviour is left 'unchecked' by the leadership. (Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians 5)

Removing someone from Church Membership is not a decision that is taken lightly, but with the hope that it will prompt the individual to recognise their sin and turn back to Jesus, so that we can welcome them back into our Church with open arms.

Appendix **G** explains how church discipline is carried out.

10. Church Members' Meetings/Church Family Meetings

All Church Members are encouraged to attend Church Members' meetings, (also called Church Family Meetings) whenever possible. These are valuable opportunities to share together the work of our Church and other organisations our Church supports, to discuss and take decisions about new activities and ideas, and to pray and praise God together.

Appendix **H** explains how often Church Members' Meetings are held and how decisions are made.

11. Amending this Church Handbook

Appendix **I** sets out how this Church Handbook can be amended.

Appendix A – Basis of Faith

1. God

There is one God, who exists eternally in three distinct but equal persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. God is unchangeable in his holiness, justice, wisdom and love. He is the almighty Creator, Saviour and Judge who sustains and governs all things according to his sovereign will for his own glory.

2. The Bible

God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice.

3. The Human Race

All men and women, being created male and female in the image of God, have inherent and equal dignity and worth. Their greatest purpose is to obey, worship and love God. As a result of the fall of our first parents, every aspect of human nature has been corrupted and all men and women are without spiritual life, guilty sinners and hostile to God. Every person is therefore under the just condemnation of God and needs to be born again, forgiven and reconciled to God in order to know and please him.

4. The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and lived a sinless life in obedience to the Father. He taught with authority and all his words are true. On the cross he died in the place of sinners, bearing God's punishment for their sin, redeeming them by his blood. He rose from the dead and in his resurrection body ascended into heaven where he is exalted as Lord of all. He intercedes for his people in the presence of the Father.

5. Salvation

Salvation is entirely a work of God's grace and cannot be earned or deserved. It has been accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ and is offered to all in the gospel. God in his love forgives sinners whom he calls, granting them repentance and faith. All who believe in Christ are justified by faith alone, adopted into the family of God and receive eternal life.

6. The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit has been sent from heaven to glorify Christ and to apply his work of salvation. He convicts sinners, imparts spiritual life and gives a true understanding of the Scriptures. He indwells all believers, brings assurance of salvation and produces increasing likeness to Christ. He builds up the Church and empowers its members for worship, service and mission.

7. The Church

The universal Church is the body of which Christ is the head and to which all who are saved belong. It is made visible in local churches, which are congregations of believers who are committed to each other for the worship of God, the preaching of the Word, the administering of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; for pastoral care and discipline, and for

evangelism. The unity of the body of Christ is expressed within and between churches by mutual love, care and encouragement. True fellowship between churches exists only where they are faithful to the gospel.

8. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Baptism and the Lord's Supper have been given to the churches by Christ as visible signs of the gospel. Baptism is a symbol of union with Christ and entry into His Church but does not impart spiritual life. The Lord's Supper is a commemoration of Christ's sacrifice offered once for all and involves no change in the bread and wine. All its blessings are received by faith.

9. Marriage

Sexual intimacy is a gift from God and is to be enjoyed exclusively within the context of marriage. Marriage is, by definition, heterosexual and between one man and one woman. Marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and His Church.

10. The Future

The Lord Jesus Christ will return in glory. He will raise the dead and judge the world in righteousness. The wicked will be sent to eternal punishment and the righteous will be welcomed into a life of eternal joy in fellowship with God. God will make all things new and will be glorified forever.

Appendix B – Doctrinal Distinctives

Baptism

Baptism is a command of the Lord Jesus Christ to all those who believe in Him (Matthew 28:19).

Given the strong missional grounds in Denbigh and in the UK more broadly for paedobaptists and credobaptists to work together in local churches, Grace Church holds a dual practice position on baptism. Those who hold a 'credobaptist' view understand baptism to signify and symbolise the cleansing from sin and our dying and being raised to new life through our faith union with Christ. Those who hold a 'paedobaptist' view would emphasise the promises of God being made to the infant or child being baptised and see baptism as a sign and seal of covenant promises made in Scripture. Infants of unbelieving parents cannot be presented for baptism because of their lack of faith and as such, the covenant promises of Scripture do not apply to them. Only the infant children of members of the church can be presented for baptism.

The church is committed to respectfully catering, where possible, for the convictions and conscience of both credobaptists and paedobaptists – who coexist in the membership and in the leadership. With God's help, our unity as a church is maintained by emphasising the centrality of the gospel and our common faith in Christ and by having careful respect and a deep bond of affection for each other.

For credobaptists, the normal mode of baptism is full immersion in water, but the Elders may agree an alternative where appropriate or necessary. For paedobaptists, the normal mode of baptism is sprinkling with water.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper (or Communion) is a symbolic meal of thanksgiving established by the Lord Jesus in which we:

- Regularly remember His atoning work on the cross
- Acknowledge our sharing in the benefits of His death
- Have fellowship with the Lord Jesus and each other
- Are reminded of His love for us, which is to guide our relationships as the body of Christ
- Proclaim His death until His return.

Marriage

Our Basis of Faith (Appendix A) sets out that the Bible is the final authority for all matters of belief and practice. The Church upholds that the teaching of the Bible is that marriage is between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-33) and that all sexual practices outside marriage between a man and a woman are sinful and wrong. This includes homosexual practices (Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) regardless of whether or not homosexual marriage is permitted by the laws of England and Wales.

As a member of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC), this Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Same-Sex Marriage adopted by the FIEC on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/same-sex-marriage).

Women in Ministry

This Church's position is that men and women have different but complementary roles and responsibilities in marriage, family life, church leadership, and elsewhere. The Bible teaches that although women are precluded from certain roles and ministries within the church, they are of equal status to men and have other important ministries.

This Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Women in Ministry adopted by the FIEC in its Statement on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/women-in-ministry).

Gospel Unity

As a member of the FIEC, this Church holds to the Doctrinal Distinctives on Gospel Unity adopted by the FIEC in its Statement on this issue. This is available on the FIEC website (https://fiec.org.uk/who-we-are/beliefs/gospel-unity).

Appendix C – Ethical Statements

Marriage

In line with our Basis of Faith and Doctrinal Distinctives it is important that the Church and Church Members in no way condone, promote, assist or encourage adulterous or extra-marital sexual practices, whether heterosexual or homosexual.

Gender

In accordance with our Doctrinal Distinctives and the FIEC Statement on Women in Ministry, we recognise that God created us male and female and calls us to live according to our gender identity, which is inseparable from our biological sex determined at conception. Our gender may not be changed or reassigned.

4.1 – Grace Church Denbigh Membership Covenant

This covenant is a summary of how we, the members of Grace Church Denbigh, promise to live together as a church family. More importantly, it is a summary of the biblical standard that God would have us live together. Our acceptance of this covenant follows the practice of believers throughout the centuries who have pledged to God and to one another to live out the gospel in community.

Having been brought by the Spirit of God to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give our whole lives in service to Him, and having been baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and believing that God has drawn us together as a church in love and commitment to Him and to one another, we promise with God's help:

- To live a life consistent with the gospel and worthy of those who are members of God's family, in order to glorify God and uphold the reputation of His church;
- To worship together regularly at the services and meetings of the church, including at Church Family Meetings and at the Lord's Supper;
- To pray regularly for each other and the activities of the church;
- To encourage and help each another by loving counsel, support and example;
- To rejoice at each other's happiness and to bear each other's burdens and sorrows with tenderness and compassion;
- To warn and gently correct one another when necessary, in a spirit of humility, always recognising our own sinfulness and need of such help;
- To make every effort to keep the unity of the church, being slow to take offence and quick to seek reconciliation in the true spirit of the gospel;
- To respect and support the Elders/Deacons/Charity Trustees as they lead the work in accordance with God's word and to submit to the discipline of the church;
- To discover the gifts that God has entrusted to each one of us and to use them, as He intends, for the benefit of the church family;
- To witness to the Lord Jesus by our words and way of life, seeking also to bring others to hear the gospel;
- To give financially to the church, on a regular basis and according to what we have, in order to further the Lord's work within our own fellowship, in our community and throughout the world.

In these ways and by God's grace we will promote the unity and health of the church.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen.

Appendix E – Church Membership

This appendix sets out the provisions for Church Membership that are referred to in the Constitution.

1. Eligibility for Church Membership

Membership of this local Church is open to all those who:

- Publicly profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and are seeking to live as one of His disciples;
- Are in full agreement with the Church's Basis of Faith (in Appendix A);
- Are prepared to accept the Doctrinal Distinctives of the Church (in Appendix B);
- Are committed to living in accordance with the Ethical Statements of the Church (in Appendix C);
- Are willing, with God's help, to keep the Grace Church Membership Covenant (in Appendix D);
- Have been baptised on confession of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ or, have been otherwise baptised as infants and now hold a convinced, biblically-reasoned peadobaptist position;
- Commit themselves to serve Christ with the other members of the Church;
- Agree to submit themselves to the leadership and authority of the Elders/Deacons/Charity Trustees of the Church; and
- Fully accept the responsibilities and obligations of Church Membership (outlined in our Church Covenant in Appendix D and paragraph 2 below.

Members are not allowed to vote until they reach the age of 18. However, younger members are encouraged to be present at Church Family Meetings/Members' Meetings and to contribute as they feel able.

2. Privileges and responsibilities of Church Members

2.1 Being a Church Member brings both privileges and responsibilities. The privileges include being identified as part of this local Church of God, being able to take part in discussing and agreeing the way in which the Church should move forward and benefitting from the pastoral care of the Church leaders and other members.

2.2 We ask all Church Members to show their commitment to actively serving Christ as part of our Church, including by agreeing to our Church Covenant (Appendix D).

2.3 Each Member also has a legal duty, which is stated in our Constitution as follows:

"It is the duty of each member of the Church to exercise his or her powers as a Member of the Church in the way he or she decides in good faith would be most likely to further the purposes of the Church."

3. Applying to become a Church Member

3.1 The first Church Members are the people who agreed to approve the original version of the Constitution together with the original version of this Church Handbook. (The fact that the first Members voted to approve the Constitution and Church Handbook, including the Basis of Faith means that no further application in accordance with the following paragraph 3.2 will be required from them).

Individuals who are listed on the register of members of the unincorporated church charity at the date the CIO is registered will be accepted into membership of the CIO once they have submitted a membership application to the Elders or have otherwise confirmed in writing that they approve the CIO Constitution and this Church Handbook, including to accept the legal duty of members of the CIO mentioned in paragraph 2.3 above. There will be no need for an interview and formal approval at a Church meeting in these circumstances.

3.2 Anyone meeting the eligibility criteria outlined in paragraph 1 above is encouraged to become a Church Member. The procedure for applying for membership is as follows:

a. Anyone interested in applying for membership of the Church should firstly speak to the Pastor/Elders.

b. They will then be asked to fill in a short application form.

c. Where a person applying for membership was previously a member of another church, the Pastor/Elders are likely to request a reference from the leaders of that church regarding the applicant's suitability for membership.

d. The Pastor/Elders will then consider whether the applicant is eligible for membership. This will normally involve arranging to meet with the applicant to discuss their application and any queries they may have. This includes discussing:

- How the applicant became a Christian and whether or not they have been baptised;

- How the applicant's life has changed, by the power of the Holy Spirit, since becoming a Christian;

- How the applicant sees themselves becoming involved at the Church;

- If the applicant agrees with the Church's Basis of Faith and is willing to accept the Doctrinal Distinctives and to live in accordance with the Church's Ethical Statements and Church Covenant; and

- If the applicant is willing to comply with the Church's Constitution and this Church Handbook, including the duty of members.

e. Where the Pastor/Elders agree that an applicant meets the criteria for membership, the Church Membership will be informed and the individual will be formally welcomed into Church Membership at the next convenient Sunday service.

3.3 New Members of the Church will be encouraged to attend all Church Members' meetings/Church Family Meetings after being admitted to membership and Members will be entitled to vote on any matter.

3.4 The Pastor and, if married, his wife shall become Members on taking up his appointment provided the eligibility criteria in paragraph 1 is met.

3.5 The Deacons will maintain a written register of all Members in accordance with Clause 23 of the CIO constitution and the CIO (General) Regulations 2012.

4. Resigning or transferring Church Membership

4.1 A Church Member may resign voluntarily by submitting a written letter or email to the Pastor/Elders.

4.2 A Church Member will cease to be a member when he/she dies.

4.3 If a Church Member wishes to transfer their membership to another church, then he/she should inform the Elders. The Pastor/Elders will usually write to the church to provide a reference if requested.

5. Removing an individual from Church Membership

5.1 Unless in the case of illness or exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Pastor/Elders, a Church Member will be treated as having resigned from membership of the Church if they have not attended the Church (or been involved in any online meetings of the Church) for a period of twelve months and have been notified in writing by the Pastor/Elders that they will be removed from membership before the change is made. The Pastor/Elders may subsequently decide to admit them back into membership. This provision does not apply to a Church Member who is serving as a mission worker in another country.

5.2 If a Church Member moves out of the geographical area served by the Church or if they begin regularly attending another church or become a member of another church, it will be assumed that they have resigned their membership, unless there are exceptional circumstances as agreed by the Pastor/Elders.

5.3 A Church Member may be removed from membership by the application of the disciplinary procedure set out in Appendix G.

Appendix F - Appointment of Church Officers

This appendix sets out how the different Church Officer roles and other positions in our Church are appointed and how they may come to an end.

1. Charity Trustees

The Church's Constitution states that the individuals who hold the following Church Officer roles are the Charity Trustees of our Church**:** Elders, Deacons and Elected Charity Trustees.

1.1 The Charity Trustees must fully subscribe to our Church's Constitution and Church Handbook, the Basis of Faith and our Doctrinal Distinctives and live in accordance with our Ethical Statements.

2. The Pastor or Pastors

2.1 The Church may appoint a Pastor or Pastors, who is/are set apart for the teaching and preaching of the Bible and the pastoral leadership of our Church. They may already be a Church Member or must become a Church Member when they take up the role of Pastor.

2.2 The decision to invite an individual to serve as a Pastor in our Church is made by the Church Members, on the recommendation of the Elders. A Church Meeting will be called for this purpose and at least 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed.

2.3 The Pastor(s) is an Elder of our Church and references in this Church Handbook to Elders include the Pastor(s). The Pastor or one of the other Elders will usually Chair meetings of Elders and Charity Trustees and Church Members providing they do not have a conflict of interest in an item to be discussed.

2.4 The Pastor(s) will usually be an employee of the Church with a contract of employment.

2.5 The Pastor(s) may resign from employment by giving notice in writing in accordance with his contract of employment.

2.6 The Elders or, in the absence of an Eldership, the Charity Trustees may seek authority at a Church Meeting to terminate the appointment of a Pastor, subject to the requirements of employment law and the Constitution. At least 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour in order for the authority to be granted. Where such authority is granted, the Elders, Deacons or Charity Trustees must still act in accordance with the requirements of employment law and the Constitution.

3. Elders

3.1 The Elders are responsible for the spiritual and pastoral oversight of our Church. Elders are men who the Holy Spirit has qualified to serve in this role, and who

demonstrate the gifting, character and conduct described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Peter 5:2-3.

3.2 Elders are nominated for appointment or re-appointment by the other Elders and appointed by the Church Members. At least 75% of Church Members present and voting must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed.

3.3 An Elder will serve for a term of 5 years and may then be re-appointed. An Elder can serve for a maximum of 10 years before taking a break of at least one year, apart from the Pastor(s), who will remain in office as an Elder for so long as they are the Pastor.

3.4 An Elder may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the other Elders.

3.5 If an Elder no longer displays the qualities required of an Elder and/or one or more of the reasons for church discipline contained in this Church Handbook apply, then the other Elders may propose to a Church Meeting that the appointment of the Elder be terminated. At least 75% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour in order for the decision to be carried.

3.6 There will usually be at least three Elders appointed from the members of the Church. If the number of Elders is less than three, then the Charity Trustees may nominate individuals to act as an Elected Charity Trustee in accordance with paragraph 4.1-4.4 to bring the number of trustees to three.

Deacons

4.1 The Deacons have key leadership responsibilities for both the practical affairs and regular activities of our Church. These include areas of administration, care and outreach. Deacons are individuals who the Holy Spirit has qualified to serve in this role, and who demonstrate the gifting, character and conduct described in Acts 6:3 and 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

4.2 Deacons are nominated for election or re-election by the Pastor/Elders and elected by Church Members. 67% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour in order for a Deacon to be elected.

4.3 A Deacon will serve for a term of 3 years and may be re-elected for up to two further terms before taking a break of at least one year.

4.4 A Deacon may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the other Charity Trustees.

4.5 If a Deacon no longer displays the qualities required of a Deacon and/or one or more of the reasons for church discipline contained in this Church Handbook apply, then the Pastor/Elders may propose to a Church Meeting that the appointment of the Deacon be terminated. 67% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour in order for the decision to be carried.

5. Elected Charity Trustees

5.1 An Elected Charity Trustee should have the leadership qualities and skills to serve as Charity Trustees but will not be an Elder of our Church. They may be appointed as an Elder of another church and are asked to help support the work of our Church.

5.2 Elected Charity Trustees will along with the Elders and Deacons be responsible for the legal, and practical affairs of the Church. They may be asked to assist in the regular activities of the church such as preaching when the Pastor is away. They should demonstrate gifting, character and calling suitable to act as trustees of the church and are referred to as Elected Charity Trustees in the Constitution and this Church Handbook.

5.3 An Elected Charity Trustee must fully subscribe to our Church's Constitution and Church Handbook, the Basis of Faith and our Doctrinal Distinctives and live in accordance with our Ethical Statements.

5.4 Elected Charity Trustees are nominated for appointment or re-appointment by the Charity Trustees and are appointed by the Church Members. The Charity Trustees shall first consider for nomination an Elder of a like-minded church to the role of an Elected Charity Trustee, to assist in the legal and spiritual leadership of the Church. At least 67% of Church Members present and eligible to vote must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed.

5.5 If no Elders/Deacons of a like-minded church are found to be willing and able to be appointed as an Elected Charity Trustee, then the Charity Trustees shall nominate a member of the Church of good standing to fill the role of Elected Charity Trustee to ensure that the number of charity trustees is no less than three. The member shall have been attending the Church for at least a calendar year. They shall propose the appointment at a church meeting and 67% of church members present at the meeting and eligible to vote must vote in favour for the individual to be appointed.

5.6 An Elected Charity Trustee will serve for a term of 3 years and may be re-elected. It is anticipated that when the number of Elders is three or more, that an Elected Charity Trustee (who may be an Elder of another church) shall step down as a Charity Trustee.

5.7 An Elected Charity Trustee may resign from office by giving notice in writing to the other Charity Trustees.

5.8 If an Elected Charity Trustee no longer displays the qualities required of an Elected Charity Trustee and/or one or more of the reasons for church discipline contained in this Church Handbook apply, then the other Charity Trustees may propose to a Church Meeting that the appointment of the Elected Charity Trustee be terminated. At least 67% of Church Members present and entitled to vote must vote in favour in order for the decision to be carried.

6. Church Secretary and Church Treasurer

6.1 The Deacons shall appoint from among themselves a Church Secretary and a Church Treasurer.

Church Secretary

6.2 The Church Secretary is responsible for overseeing the administration and 'corporate' governance of our Church. This includes the arrangements for Church Meetings (including preparing, and sending notices and taking minutes), making sure that the provisions of the Constitution and Church Handbook are followed, managing the documentation relating to employment of staff and/or paid office holders and taking minutes of Elders/Deacons/Charity Trustees meetings. The Church Secretary in conjunction with the Elders/Deacons/Charity Trustees also maintains the register of members, which we must do under the terms of our Constitution.

Church Treasurer

6.3 The Church Treasurer is responsible for overseeing the financial governance of the Church. This includes maintaining the accounts of the Church and supporting records and ensuring that the Charity Trustees have implemented suitable financial controls.

7. Other Church Officers

7.1 The Charity Trustees may appoint individuals to other Church Officer roles within the Church. Only those individuals appointed to the Church Officer roles specified in the Constitution will be Charity Trustees.

7.2 Other than the Charity Trustees, those individuals who held Church Officer roles immediately before the transfer of assets and liabilities from the charitable unincorporated association to the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) shall continue in office in the CIO with no requirement for re-appointment. This is unless the Church Members have agreed that they should not continue in office when this Church Handbook is first adopted, or the individuals resign from office or their appointment otherwise comes to an end in accordance with this Church Handbook.

8. Church staff

The Elders or Charity Trustees may appoint Church staff as employees and/or paid office holders in accordance with the requirements of employment law. The appointment of staff must be approved by Church Members at a Church Meeting.

Appendix G – Church discipline

This appendix explains the reasons that our Church may need to exercise discipline and the procedure we will follow, which is based on the Bible's teaching.

1. Who church discipline applies to

Clause 9.4 of the Constitution sets out certain steps that must be followed if a Church Member is to be removed from membership as a result of church discipline and who is involved in the decision.

2. Reasons for church discipline

2.1 A Church Member may be subject to church discipline for any of the following reasons:

2.2 They err in doctrine so that they no longer affirm the Basis of Faith of the Church (see Appendix A).

2.3 They are no longer willing to accept the practices and doctrinal positions that are set out in the Church's Doctrinal Distinctives (see Appendix B).

2.4 They err in conduct by committing open sin which brings the Lord Jesus, His Gospel and/or the Church into disrepute.

2.5 They have consistently failed to fulfil the responsibilities and obligations of a member of the Church.

2.6 They refuse to repent of sin committed against a Church Member or another person which has been drawn to their attention.

2.7 They have made false and malicious allegations against a Church Member or another person.

2.8 They are causing significant and/or persistent division or dissension in the Church.

2.9 They are no longer willing to submit to the leadership and authority of the Elders of the Church.

3. Process for church discipline

3.1 The Elders must be informed as soon as possible where it is believed that any of the reasons set out in paragraph 2 above apply to a Church Member. Where a member of the Church believes they have been sinned against, they should normally raise the issue first with the person concerned and only report it to Elders if the two members concerned are unable to resolve the matter between themselves.

3.2 Where the Elders are informed, or they themselves believe that any of the reasons set out in paragraph 2 above apply to a Church Member, at least two of the Elders

will meet informally with the Church Member to discuss the matter and seek to resolve it, in line with Biblical principles.

3.3 The Elders looking into the matter will decide whether it is necessary to hold a formal disciplinary meeting and what additional steps they should take, if any.

3.4 Where there is only one recognised Elder in the church, or in circumstances where there are two Elders but the reason for discipline relates to an allegation against one of those Elders, or they are personally conflicted through association with an individual being investigated under these provisions, the Membership (or the remaining Elder not under investigation or not conflicted) will ask the Elders of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Mold to provide a substitute/support Elder or Elders, of their choosing, for assistance with the disciplinary matter. Such an Elder or Elders will be regarded by the Members of Grace Church Denbigh as an Elder or Elders of Grace Church Denbigh for the limited purposes of this Appendix G.

3.5 During the process of looking into such a matter, the Elders may decide that it is appropriate to temporarily limit the Church Member's involvement in church activities, while the issue is being investigated and a clear conclusion reached. The Church Member concerned will be notified if this is the case, with clear reasons given and an explanation of what will happen next. At the discretion of the Elders, the Church Member may continue to attend and vote at Church Members' meetings and partake of the Lord's Supper/Communion.

4. Process for removal from Church Membership

4.1 Before the Elders propose removing someone from Church Membership they must carry out the following process:

4.1.1 The Elders will have made all reasonable efforts to address the issue, as outlined in paragraph 3 above, so that the Church Member can continue in membership, if possible.

4.1.2 If the Elders are formally considering whether or not to remove the Church Member from membership, they will write to the Church Member to explain why they are considering removing their membership.

4.1.3 The Elders will give the Church Member 21 clear days'[5] notice of a meeting at which they will formally consider whether the Church Member be removed from membership. The Church Member will be invited to make representations either at the meeting or in writing before the meeting. They can either make such representations themselves or ask a representative to do this for them.

[5] When counting "clear days" you need to exclude the day on which the notice is deemed to have been received by members and the day on which the meeting is held. E.g. if a meeting is to be held on the 25th day of the month, the notice must be given on the 3rd day, as there are 21 days between those dates. This means that the notice must be sent out on the 1st day of the month because under clause 11.3.5 of the Constitution notices are deemed to be received 48 hours after they are sent.

4.1.4 The Elders must take into account those representations when deciding whether to remove the Church Member from membership.

4.2 The Church Member will be informed of the decision of the Elders and the register of Members will be amended, if required.

4.3 Anyone who has been removed as a Church Member may re-apply for membership in the normal way as outlined in Appendix E and will be welcomed back into Church Membership if their application is approved.

5. Additional disciplinary measures

5.1 Even in cases where there has been genuine repentance, the Elders may still be required to report certain issues to the relevant secular authorities. In such cases, the Elders will give the individual concerned all the pastoral and practical support that is appropriate for someone who is genuinely repentant (whether or not they are still a Church Member).

5.2 If someone is removed from Church Membership, the Elders may prayerfully consider whether it would be appropriate to implement any of the following additional measures:

5.2.1 A restriction from attending or taking part in any or all of the meetings of the Church, including meetings or activities that are normally open to the public.

5.2.2 The remaining Church Members may be asked not to have any association with the person who has been removed from membership, in line with specific guidance from the Elders.

5.2.3 Any of these additional disciplinary measures may be altered or removed later by the Elders.

Appendix H - Church Members'/Church Family Meetings

This Appendix explains when and how Church Members' Meetings will take place. In our Constitution these are called "General meetings of Members" and this means the same thing as "Church Members' Meetings" or "Church Family Meetings".

1. Arrangements for Church Members' Meetings

1.1 The Constitution sets out the arrangements our Church must follow for Church Members' Meetings, under the headings "Members' Decisions" and "General meetings of members" (clauses 10 and 11). These are summarised here but the provisions of the Constitution must be followed.

1.2 All Church Members will be given at least 14 clear days' advanced notice of Church Members' Meetings in writing. Clause 11.3.3 of the Constitution sets out the information that we are required to provide in the notice of a Church Members' Meeting. Copies of the agenda and minutes of the previous Church Members' Meeting will be made available to Church Members.

1.3 Church Members' Meetings must be held in person unless there is an express provision in the Constitution or under legislation for general meetings to be held electronically.

1.4 If Church Members want to suggest an item to be discussed under 'any other business' they should inform the Elders at least 7 days before the meeting, so that it can be considered.

2. Frequency

2.1 Under our Constitution we must have an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year and there is certain 'business' which has to be undertaken in that meeting, such as receiving our Church's annual accounts for the previous year.

2.2 Our Church usually holds 4 other 'Church Family Meetings' during the year in addition to the AGM, so that, except for in the summer holidays, there is usually one every other month.

3. Quorum

3.1 In order to make decisions at a Church Members' Meeting there have to be enough Church Members present to form a 'quorum'. Our Constitution says that our quorum is 40% of all current Church Members or 5 Church Members, whichever is higher. This means that a sufficient number of Church Members must be present in person, not including any postal or proxy votes (see 4.4 below).

3.2 If there are not enough Church Members present to form a quorum then the meeting will either be postponed or can go ahead, but if it goes ahead no decisions can be made. The Constitution sets out what happens if a reconvened meeting that was postponed still does not have a quorum.

4. Voting for decisions

4.1 Most decisions at a Church Members' Meeting can be made by a simple majority of Church Members present and voting (i.e. 51% or more) and each Church Member has one vote. In these cases, voting will normally be conducted by a show of hands and includes proxy votes and postal or email votes where these have been permitted by the Elders, Deacons or Charity Trustees.

4.2 There are some more significant decisions where the number of Church Members voting in favour must be higher; for example, for changes to the Constitution. These are set out in paragraph 5 below.

4.3 If a decision is significant or might be contentious, the Elders/Deacons may decide that voting will take place by a secret ballot. A secret ballot can also be requested by 51% of the Church Members present at the meeting.

4.4 The Elders/Deacons can also decide to allow Church Members to vote by proxy, an email or postal vote and/or by passing a written resolution so that Church Members who cannot attend the Church Meeting can still vote. If any of these methods are adopted the Elders/Deacons will provide guidance about how votes can be submitted, and the procedures that must be followed so that they can ensure that only people who are Church Members and entitled to vote have submitted votes. If proxy, email or postal voting are allowed, these votes count in the same way as if the Church Member had been present and voting at the Church Meeting and will be included where this Church Handbook refers to decisions made "at a Church Members meeting." However, a proxy or postal vote will not count towards the quorum.

4.5 The Constitution provides more detail about voting at Church Members meetings.

5. Voting requirements for specific decisions

5.1 The table below shows the decisions that must be approved by Church Members at a Church Members' Meeting under the Constitution or a specific section of the Church Handbook, including where a majority is required that is more than a simple majority. It also says what majority is required and where this is stated in the Constitution or Church Handbook. These are listed as "Type A decisions" in the table below.

5.2 There are other decisions that Church Members must approve at a Church Members' meeting even though these are not specified in detail under the provisions of the Constitution or this Church Handbook. These are listed as "Type B decisions" in the table below.

Type A decisions		
	Decision	**Majority required**
1	To allow a Church Members' Meeting to proceed on short notice (Constitution - 11.3.2)	90% of all Church Members
2	To amend the Constitution (Constitution - 28.1)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
3	To amend the Basis of Faith (Constitution - 28.3)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
4	To wind up the Church (Constitution - 29)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
5	To appoint a Pastor (Handbook – Appendix F, paragraph 2.2)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
6	To remove a Pastor from office (Handbook - Appendix F, paragraph 2.6)	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
7	To appoint an Elder (Handbook - Appendix F, paragraph 3.2)	75% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members' Meeting
8	To remove an Elder from office (Handbook - Appendix F, paragraph 3.5)	75% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members' Meeting
9	To appoint a Deacon (Handbook - Appendix F, paragraph 4.2)	67% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members' Meeting
10	To remove a Deacon from office (Handbook - Appendix F, paragraph 4.5)	67% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members' Meeting
11	To elect an Elected Charity Trustee (Handbook - Appendix F, paragraphs 5.4 and 5.5)	67% of Church Members' voting at a Church Members' Meeting
12	To remove an Elected Charity Trustee from office (Handbook - Appendix F, paragraph 5.8)	67% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting

Type B decisions		
	Decision	**Majority required**
1	To commit expenditure of more than £5,000 for a single item or a cumulative amount of more than £5,000.	51% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
2	To buy or sell land or buildings	51% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting
3	To establish a new paid staff post and/or appoint a new member of staff other than	51% of Church Members voting at a

	pastor	Church Members' Meeting
4	To amalgamate or transfer the undertaking of the Church with another Church or organisation	75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting (This must be 75% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting or 100% of Church Members if passed otherwise than at a Church Members' Meeting, if the Church's assets are being transferred to another CIO[6])
5	To formally establish a new CIO or other entity as a Church plant	51% of Church Members voting at a Church Members' Meeting

[6] This is a requirement under s.240 Charities Act 2011.

Appendix I – Amendments to the Church Handbook

1. The Church Handbook can be changed if the proposed amendment is approved by the Church Members at a Church Members' Meeting. This is provided the proposed amendment would not cause the Church to lose its charitable status or make the Church Handbook inconsistent with our Constitution. The Church Handbook can also be amended by a written resolution of Church Members passed in accordance with clause 10.3 of the Constitution.

2. A majority of 75% of those Church Members present and voting at a Church Members' meeting is needed to approve an amendment to the Church Handbook.

3. Notice will be given to Church Members in advance if any changes are proposed to the Church Handbook. This will provide details of the proposed changes including the specific wording of the amendment(s).

4. Any changes to our Constitution must be made in accordance with clause 28 of the Constitution.