

Charis Fellowship Manual Of Procedure



Charis Fellowship is registered as an Assumed Business Name of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc. in the state of Indiana.

The Charis Fellowship is comprised of autonomous yet interdependent local churches. Together these churches celebrate, collaborate, catalyze, and commemorate a Gospel movement that values biblical truth, biblical relationships, and biblical mission.

ARTICLE I – MEMBERSHIP

Section One. Procedure.

1. Application for membership shall be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Fellowship Council accompanied by evidence of compliance with the conditions set forth in Section One, Article IV of the Constitution. Applications must be received before the first day of January preceding the annual meeting of the corporation. The Fellowship Council may extend this deadline up to two months before the annual meeting if there is a written request for the extension from a national ministry, a cooperating ministry, a cooperating district, or a sponsoring church that is already a member of the Charis Fellowship.
2. The Fellowship Council will publish the names and locations of churches who are applying for membership at least one month in advance of the next annual meeting of the corporation.
3. A check for membership fees shall accompany the application.
4. The Fellowship Council shall recommend the appropriate action to be taken regarding the application at the next annual meeting of the corporation.
5. Upon recommendation of the Fellowship Council, a congregation may be received by majority affirmative vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at the annual meeting of the corporation.

Section Two. Termination of Membership. Should a member church fail to adhere to the requirements of Article IV, Section One of the Constitution at anytime or fail to submit statistical reports or pay membership fees for a period of three successive years, it shall be subject to dismissal from the Fellowship in the following manner:

1. Upon report of such failure, the Fellowship Council shall investigate the report and determine the validity of the charge. It shall be the intent of the Council to offer assistance to the offending church to enable it to comply with its membership obligations.
2. Upon satisfactory resolution of the problem, a report of the church's compliance shall be entered into the records of the Fellowship Council and may be announced to the Corporation at the discretion of the Council.
3. If no satisfactory resolution of the problem is agreed upon, the finding of the Fellowship Council shall be reported to the next annual meeting of the Corporation.

4. Upon the recommendation of the Fellowship Council the offending church shall be dismissed from the Fellowship by majority affirmative vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at the annual meeting of the corporation.

Section Three: Procedure for the Re-Instatement of Dismissed Churches. Should a church that was previously dismissed from the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches desire to become a member again of the Charis Fellowship, the following procedures should be followed:

1. The Church seeking re-instatement should comply with all of the procedures for membership as outlined in Section 1 of this Article.
2. The only additional requirement of a church to be re-instated is that along with the application for membership there must be a written statement signed by at least three local church leaders/members that:
 - a. Describe the resolution to any past issues that led to the dismissal.
 - b. Explain the church's reasons to become faithful members again with the Charis Fellowship.

ARTICLE II – MEETINGS OF MEMBERS

Section One. Place of Meeting. The Fellowship Council may designate any place within or without the State of Indiana as the place of the annual meeting or any special meeting.

Section Two. Notice of Meetings. Written or printed notice stating the time and place of the meeting shall be given by the Secretary of the Fellowship Council to each member church at least thirty days prior to the meeting. The notice of any special meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting.

Section Three. Delegates. In order to seat delegates, each church must meet the following requirements.

1. The appropriate credential form must be filed with the Fellowship Coordinator by the date specified.
2. The assigned membership fees, assessed by the previous annual meeting of members, shall be received by the Fellowship Coordinator by the date specified.
3. The annual statistical report shall be submitted and received by the date specified.
4. Delegates whose churches fail to meet these requirements shall be seated only upon a two thirds majority affirmative vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at any meeting based upon extenuating circumstances deemed worthy of exception.
5. Member churches are expected to pay membership fees whether or not they send delegates to any meeting of the corporation, and the treasurer is directed to notify delinquent members of this responsibility.

6. Each member church shall be entitled to at least two delegates. Additional delegates are based on the average attendance at the largest regular gathering of the member church according to the following schedule:

Average Attendance Number of Delegates

0-50	2
51-100	3
101-200	5
201-300	10
301-500	20
501-1000	25
1001-2000	30
2001+	35

Section Four. Transaction of Business. The agenda for the opening session of the conference shall include the report of the Membership Committee, presentation of new churches for membership, approval of an agenda for the business sessions, and the election of officers for the next conference year. Additional reports of the Membership Committee shall be made only at the beginning of each session's business. The agenda of any special meeting shall be an early order of business at the first session.

Any member of a member church, not a delegate, shall have all privileges of a delegate, except that he shall not be allowed to make a motion or to vote upon any question. Persons desiring to speak in the conference must first address the moderator and be recognized. No person shall speak upon the same question more than twice until others have had ample opportunity to speak. Debate shall be limited to ten minutes per speech. Standard rules of order, such as Robert's, shall be followed in all points not specifically provided for herein.

Section Five. Dissent. In the event that divisive issues threaten to disrupt business sessions and subvert the purposes of the Conference, the moderator shall:

1. Stop all further debate on the issue for that business session.
2. Call for a meeting of the Fellowship Council to be held before the next business session to formulate a recommendation on further procedures concerning this issue.
3. Present this recommendation as the first item of business at the next business session.
4. Call for an immediate vote on the recommendation of the Fellowship Council without further debate. Should a recommendation to stop debate fail to pass, debate shall resume.

ARTICLE III – FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL (BOARD OF DIRECTORS)

Section One. Responsibilities. Specific duties of the Council include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. It shall be the duty of the Council to make full and complete arrangements for the conference (and any special meetings), including the preparation of the proposed agenda. The Council shall consult recognized National Ministries in its conference planning and may invite representatives of National and Cooperating Ministries to its planning sessions. (Expenses for these representatives shall be borne by their respective ministries.)
2. The Council shall select the time and place for the conference and shall report its plans to the conference at least two years in advance.
3. The Council shall receive and evaluate applications from churches seeking membership in the corporation, recommending the appropriate action to be taken by the conference.
4. The Council shall investigate reports concerning a member church's failure to adhere to the requirements for membership in the corporation, determine the validity of the charges, and recommend the appropriate action to be taken, if any, by the conference.
5. The Council shall convene any special meetings of the Fellowship for emergency purposes.
6. The Council shall receive and evaluate applications for recognition from prospective districts of churches and recommend the appropriate action, if any, to be taken by the conference.
7. The Council shall receive and evaluate the requests of groups desiring recognition as national or cooperating ministries of the corporation, recommending the appropriate action to be taken by the conference.
8. The Council shall serve as the finance committee for the Fellowship, reporting to the conference the financial condition of the corporation and proposing an annual budget for the conference's approval.
9. At each annual meeting of the corporation, the Council shall report on its own activity, its plans, and recommendations for progress in the Fellowship. It shall alert the conference to potential problems, areas of concern, opportunities for ministry, etc., and shall recommend appropriate action with regard to these matters. Such suggestions may be conveyed to the conference, in consultation with the Executive Director, through his annual address.
10. The Council shall name the endorsing agents of the Fellowship for the military chaplaincy.
11. The Council may serve in an advisory capacity to its member churches, recognized districts, national and cooperating ministries, and other bodies who seek its counsel with no authority other than to offer counsel to these bodies.
12. Each elected member of the Council shall be responsible to communicate with one or more districts in his region as determined by the Council.

13. The Council shall be responsible for the soliciting and the receiving of statistical reports. It shall report significant statistical information at the annual meeting of the corporation.
14. When the moderator stops debate on a divisive issue at a business session of the conference, the Council shall meet to make a recommendation to the next business session. It shall include in this recommendation: 1) whether or not to invoke a moratorium and, 2) if a moratorium is recommended, it shall also recommend procedures for conflict resolution.
15. The Fellowship Council and Nominating Committee shall make reasonable effort to include qualified laity in leadership positions in the Fellowship.
16. The Fellowship Council shall present a name for Executive Director to the conference one year prior to the expiration of the current term for affirmation by the delegates. That Executive Director shall select an Assistant Director, that is approved by the Fellowship Council to be affirmed by the delegates on a single question ballot for a one, two or three-year term.
17. Contracts shall be established for employees of the Fellowship Council. Each employee shall be subject to periodic review.
18. The Fellowship Council may consult National and Cooperating ministries in the development and implementation of strategic plans as appropriate to the mission of the Charis Fellowship.

Section Two. Meetings. The Council will hold an annual meeting just prior to the conference at the place designated for the annual meeting of the corporation. A mid-year meeting of the Council will be held approximately six months after each annual meeting of the corporation at a time and place specified by the Council. The mid-year meeting shall not be held if there is insufficient business to merit the expense and time. Other special meetings of the Council may be called by the chairman in consultation with the other Council members.

Section Three. Board Decisions. All actions of the Council must be sustained by a majority vote of the Council membership (nine or more affirmative votes).

Section Four. Notice. Notice of any meeting of the Fellowship Council must be given to each member of the Council at least thirty days prior to the meeting. The notice of any special meeting shall state the purpose of the meeting.

Section Five. Removal. Any member of the Fellowship Council who ceases to fulfill the Biblical guidelines for leadership as set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 shall be removed from office by majority vote of the remaining Council members. This action shall be ratified by the corporation at its next annual meeting. If a member leaves the region he represents, his position on the Fellowship Council is vacated.

Section Six. Vacancies. In case a vacancy occurs on the Council, the remaining members of the Council shall fill this vacancy by appointing a qualified representative from the region represented by the member being replaced. If the unexpired portion of the term remaining extends beyond the next annual meeting of the corporation, the Council's appointment shall be ratified at that meeting.

ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

Section One. Responsibilities and Duties. The officers shall have the powers and discharge the duties customarily and usually held and performed by like officers in similar corporations, including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Executive Director.

- a. He is the chief executive officer of the corporation during the years for which he is elected
- b. He is a member, ex-officio, of the Fellowship Council and shall serve as chairman of the Council for the years of his term as Executive Director.
- c. He will serve as moderator, presiding over any and all business meetings of the conference, or he may select another person to serve as moderator. Should he choose another to serve as moderator, the Executive Director shall retain all rights, responsibilities, and authorities described in the Constitution and the Manual of Procedure. Anyone acting as moderator, if he is personally involved in a matter, shall defer to the Executive Director or Assistant Director.
- d. Represent the Charis Fellowship as its official spokesperson for all matters related to the official communication, public press releases, or other informational opportunities presented during his term.
- e. Adequately prepare the newly elected Executive Director for the position through education and communication as deemed necessary to provide a smooth transition between administrations.
- f. The Executive Director must agree to the Charis Commitment to Common Identity of the Charis Fellowship, be a member in good standing in one of the member churches in the Charis Fellowship and be committed to the welfare and health of the Charis Fellowship.

2. Assistant Director.

- a. He is a member, ex-officio, of the Fellowship Council and shall serve as vice chairman of the Council for the years of his term as Assistant Director.
- b. He shall fulfill the functions of the Executive Director in the latter's absence or illness or when called upon by the Executive Director to do so.
- c. He shall assume the office of Executive Director in the event of his resignation, decease or inability to serve as the Executive Director upon notification by secretary of the Fellowship Council.
- d. Represent the Charis Fellowship when delegated to do so by the Executive Director in areas deemed helpful by the Executive Director.

- e. Adequately prepare the newly elected -Assistant Director for the position through education and communication as deemed necessary to provide a smooth transition between administrations.
- f. The -Assistant Director must agree to the Charis Commitment to Common Identity of the Charis Fellowship, be a member in good standing in one of the member churches in the Charis Fellowship and be committed to the welfare and health of the Charis Fellowship.

3. Secretary.

- a. He shall make and keep an accurate, written record of all Fellowship Council and conference business and make records available for annual publication in a form approved by the Fellowship Council.
- b. He shall secure the service of an assistant secretary to facilitate the execution of his duties.
- c. With the cooperation of the Minutes Review Committee he shall provide printed copies of the minutes of each conference business session for publication.
- d. The Conference may choose to amend published minutes at the first business session succeeding publication.

4. Treasurer.

- a. He shall receive and dispense all funds coming to the Fellowship and shall establish and maintain a bank account in which said funds are to be kept.
- b. He shall report to the Council as requested and annually at the annual meeting of the corporation delineating the financial status of the corporation.
- c. He shall invest available funds in such a way as to provide additional income to the Fellowship.

Section Two. Fellowship Coordinator and Administrative Staff.

- 1. The Council shall employ a Fellowship Coordinator and Administrative Staff as needed. Their remuneration shall be included in the budget proposed to the annual meeting. The Fellowship Council shall establish necessary guidelines.
- 2. They shall be directly responsible to the Executive Director and the Fellowship Council and ultimately to the corporation.
- 3. They may sit with the Fellowship Council by invitation but shall not have a vote in its proceedings.

Section Three. Removal. Any officer who ceases to fulfill the Biblical guidelines for leadership as set forth in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 shall be removed from office by majority vote of the Council. This action shall be ratified by the corporation at its next annual meeting.

Section Four. Vacancies. Other than the office of Executive Director, a vacancy may be filled by the Fellowship Council for the unexpired portion of the term. In the case of a vacancy in the office of Executive Director, the Assistant Director will immediately succeed to the office and responsibility of Executive Director upon notification by the secretary.

ARTICLE V – COMMITTEES

Section One. Membership Committee.

1. A Membership Committee, consisting of three members, shall be appointed by the Fellowship Council. Members shall serve three-year terms, arranged so that one new member is appointed each conference year.
2. The chairman shall be named annually by the Fellowship Council.
3. It shall be the duty of the Committee to provide appropriate credential forms to member churches and a place at which these forms and membership fees shall be received.
4. This Committee shall have no authority to withhold any delegate with properly executed credentials from the conference.
5. In the event of disputed delegations from member churches, the membership committee shall refer the question to the Fellowship Council which, in turn, shall make recommendation of the appropriate action to be taken by the conference.

Section Two. Nominating Committee.

1. The Nominating Committee shall present nominees to the conference for the annual election of the Fellowship Council.
2. Nominees shall be triune immersed members in good standing of congregations that are members of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc. and shall give their consent to nomination and shall agree to serve, if elected.
3. The geographical regions which nominees are to represent on the Fellowship Council shall include the following recognized Districts:
 - a. Region A: Arctic, Hawaii, Mountain Plains, Nor Cal, Pacific-Northwest, Southern California Arizona, Iowa Midlands, and Heartland
 - b. Region B: Northcentral Ohio, Northeastern Ohio, Northwest Ohio, Tri-States, Allegheny and Western Pennsylvania
 - c. Region C: Blue Ridge, Chesapeake, Mid Atlantic, Northern Atlantic, Florida, and Southern.
4. Each cooperating district may annually submit to the Nominating Committee the name of one member of a church within its district as nominees for the Fellowship Council. These names shall be placed on the ballot. If a district fails to submit a name in timely fashion, the committee may add a nominee of its own choosing from that particular district.

5. This committee shall submit nominations to the Fellowship Coordinator to be included on a printed ballot. The ballot is to be so arranged that only one nominee from each region shall be elected to the Fellowship Council.

Section Three. Parliamentary Committee. The duties of this committee are stated in the Charis Fellowship Constitution, ARTICLE VIII, Section Three.

Section Four. Minutes Review Committee. A Minutes Review committee shall be appointed annually by the Fellowship Council to review and approve the minutes of the Conference before they are published.

Section Five. Social Concerns Committee. A Social Concerns Committee shall be appointed by the Fellowship Council. Members shall serve indefinite terms. The chairman shall be named by the Fellowship Council. It shall be the duty of the Committee to recommend annual resolutions to the conference for approval by the delegates according to the following guidelines:

1. Resolutions should address societal issues from the standpoint of biblical values.
2. Resolutions are prepared and submitted by the Social Concerns Committee. Resolutions can be proposed to the Social Concerns Committee subject to policies on their focus, style and deadline.
3. Resolutions shall be submitted to Fellowship Council for affirmation at least one month before National Conference.
4. Resolutions affirmed by Fellowship Council should be made available to delegates at least a day before the opening of Conference business.
5. Resolutions are open to discussion but not alteration (except by the chair, for purposes of clarity or corrections of grammar or fact).
6. Resolutions are voted either up or down. "Division of the Question" is permitted.
7. Resolutions are to be communicated to the local churches.

Section Six. Committee Expenses. Expenses of any committee shall be defrayed by the corporation upon receipt of proper reports to the treasurer.

ARTICLE VI – MINISTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Section One. National Ministries.

1. Requirements. Although Charis Fellowship national ministries remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, such ministries seeking recognition by the corporation and desiring to serve the Fellowship as a national ministry shall meet the following requirements:
 - a. The ministry and its governing body shall agree to live harmoniously under the Charis Commitment to Common Identity set forth in Section Two of Article III of this Manual of Procedure.

- b. The ministry must be sponsored and controlled by members of Charis Fellowship churches.
 - c. The ministry shall not be a subsidiary of only one local church; it shall have representation on its governing board from each of the geographical regions of the Fellowship as identified in Article V, Section Two, Point #3 of the Manual of Procedure.
 - d. The ministry must have a scope of ministry broader than the immediate local church ministries and exist to serve other Grace Brethren Churches.
 - e. The ministry must meet a recognized need related to the fulfilling of the Great Commission.
 - f. The ministry must be able to demonstrate a tradition of national influence that has consistently advanced the mission of the Charis Fellowship.
 - g. The Ministry must be able to demonstrate a tradition of financial stewardship and accounting practices.
 - h. The Fellowship Council must believe that is in the best interest of the Fellowship for the Ministry to receive this recognition.
- 2. Procedure. National Ministries meeting the requirements of Section One of this Article may be recognized by the Fellowship, upon recommendation of the Fellowship Council, by two thirds affirmative majority vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting.
 - 3. Recognized National Ministries. Ministries recognized as national ministries of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc. are not creations of the Fellowship, nor are they an integral part of its organization. While the Charis Fellowship requests an annual report as a courtesy, it does not in any way control any of the recognized national ministries.
 - 4. Review. The Fellowship Council has the responsibility to review national ministries regarding the above qualifications. Recommendations for removal of a National Ministry's recognition shall be approved by the delegates by a majority affirmative vote.

Section Two: Cooperating Ministries.

- 1. Requirements. Although Charis Fellowship cooperating ministries remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, such ministries seeking recognition by the corporation and desiring to serve the Fellowship as a cooperating ministry shall meet the following requirements:
 - a. The ministry and its governing body shall agree to live harmoniously under the Charis Commitment to Common Identity set forth in Section Two of Article III of this Constitution.
 - b. The ministry must be sponsored by at least four Charis Fellowship churches or controlled by members of Charis Fellowship churches.

- c. The ministry must have a scope of ministry broader than the immediate local church ministries.
 - d. The ministry must meet a recognized need related to the Commitment to Common Mission of the Charis Fellowship.
2. Procedure. Ministries meeting the above requirements may be recognized by the Fellowship, upon recommendation of the Fellowship Council, by an affirmative majority vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting.
3. Recognized Cooperating Ministries. Ministries recognized as cooperating ministries of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, Inc. are not creations of the Fellowship, nor are they an integral part of its organization. While the Charis Fellowship requests an annual report as a courtesy, it does not in any way control any of the recognized cooperating ministries.
4. Review. The Cooperating Ministry has the responsibility to demonstrate that it desires and qualifies for Cooperating Ministry status at least every five years. The Fellowship Council has the responsibility to review cooperating ministries regarding the above qualifications. Recommendations for removal of a Cooperating Ministry's recognition shall be approved by the delegates by a majority affirmative vote.

Section Three: Cooperating Districts.

Requirements. Although Charis Fellowship Cooperating Districts remain distinct, autonomous legal entities, in order to be granted and to maintain the status of a Charis Fellowship Cooperating District, the following requirements must be met.

1. A district may be formed with a minimum of three churches.
2. The district may be organized for fellowship and cooperative ministry with area churches and the Charis Fellowship.
3. The district and district officers shall subscribe to the Charis Commitment to Common Identity.
4. The district shall have made application with Charis Fellowship for recognition as a cooperating district.

ARTICLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS

Section One. Continuing Resolutions. Continuing resolutions may be submitted at the annual meeting of the corporation by the Fellowship Council or from the floor. The resolution must be in writing. If the resolution is submitted from the floor, a written presentation must be given to the secretary during the same business session at which the resolution is presented.

Section Two. Conference Year. The conference year shall begin with the conclusion of the conference and continue to the conclusion of the succeeding conference.

Section Three. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the corporation shall be November 1 through October 31.

Section Four. Affiliations. The Fellowship may affiliate with other fraternal, evangelical organizations only with the adoption of an appropriate resolution by the Conference. Cooperation with such organizations, without formal membership, may be approved by the Executive Committee of the Fellowship Council.

Section Five. Ordination of Pastors. Each local church has the authority and responsibility to hire and ordain its pastors for ministry. Charis Fellowship churches are encouraged to ask a Charis Fellowship cooperating district to provide assistance in this ordination process so that these leaders can benefit from an ordination that is recognized among the Charis Fellowship churches. Inspire Charis Pastors Network, a National Ministry of the Charis Fellowship, develops and guides the ordination process used by the districts and maintains a list of recognized pastors who have been both ordained by a local church and endorsed by a Charis Fellowship cooperating district.

Section Six. Endorsing Agent for Chaplains. The Fellowship Council has the responsibility to appoint, oversee and annually review the chaplain Endorsing Agent on behalf of Charis Fellowship.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS TO MANUAL OF PROCEDURE

This Manual of Procedure may be amended by a majority affirmative vote of the delegates present, entitled to vote, and voting at any business session.