

“I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”
- John 17:23 NIV

A Covenant of Agreement

Scriptural Basis for Merge

- How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down upon the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down over the collar of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord ordained his blessing, life for evermore.
(Psalm 133 *NRSV*)
- For nothing is impossible with God.
(Luke 1:37 *NIV 1984*)
- There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.
(Ephesians 4:4-6 *NRSV*)
- For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.
(1 Corinthians 12:12 *NRSV*)

Why merge and why now? A merger of our two congregations under our present circumstances would be a bold and perhaps trend-setting step. The importance of what you decide about this merger will affect the future generation. The merger would not come about because the institutional survival of either or both congregations is at stake, but the effective mission of Christ’s church is.

- Merger Task Force Report to Sessions

Disclaimer: The Merger Task Group knows that many actions listed in this covenant of agreement will require professional legal and financial assistance. Regarding disposition and/or combination of properties, assets, and use of the resultant proceeds, advice from an attorney and a CPA familiar with non-profit organizations will be pursued. No money was spent for any services during this year's study. However, money will be required to complete the necessary actions.

Reports from Sub-groups

I. Property

“Let the Lord Decide”

A. Scriptural Basis

When the Israelites who had been wandering in the wilderness were moving into the Promised Land (Joshua 18-19), they distributed the land among the tribes by lot. When it was time to select the first King of Israel (1 Samuel 10), the prophet Samuel presided over a lottery. When King Saul needed to find out which soldier disobeyed his command to fast during a battle (1 Samuel 14), he discovered the guilty party by lot. When Jonah ran away from his calling, and a great storm arose, threatening to swamp the boat, the sailors drew lots to determine who was the cause of their calamity (Jonah 1), and the lot, of course, fell on Jonah. When Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, saw the vision of the angel to tell him he would have a son (Luke 1), he was serving in the Temple that day because he'd been chosen by lot. And when the disciples were ready to choose a replacement for Judas (Acts 1), Mathias was chosen by lot. In all these instances, the people of God were confident that the Lord would direct the selection.

B. Background Information

Mickey Pierson contacted Charlie Patterson to provide an opinion on the value of Grace Presbyterian Church's property. Mr. Patterson provided an opinion report at no charge. In his opinion report, Mr. Patterson placed the value of the buildings and property between \$650,000 - \$700,000. This does not include Grace's manse.

It is important to note that a portion of Grace's land is inside the flood plain.

Ced Derby contacted Randy Tarpley and requested an opinion as well. Mr. Tarpley also provided an opinion report at no charge. Mr. Tarpley's opinion value for Grace's buildings and land was \$600,00 - \$800,000. Mr. Tarpley's opinion value for the manse was \$120,000. His opinion value for First Presbyterian Church was \$400,000 - \$600,000.

C. Proposal for Properties

After the vote to merge, the congregations of First and Grace Presbyterian Churches will let the Lord decide which property we will sell. Through a real estate agency or two agencies, we will put both properties on the market at once. After one property is sold or leased, we will move to the remaining property. Terms of the sale or lease must be approved by the new Session and Grace Presbytery.

D. What to Do with Both Properties While on the Market

During the interim time before one property sells, we will worship alternately at Grace and First according to the liturgical calendar:

Epiphany (Jan. 1- March 8), Lent (March 9- April 23), Easter (April 24-June 11), Pentecost (June 12 – August 31), Ordinary Time (Sept. 1- November 26), and Advent/Christmas (November 27- December 31). We will begin Epiphany at the Grace Presbyterian site so that we are then celebrating Easter at Grace and ending with Christmas at First Presbyterian.

This will help keep both properties as working churches. Each church will be maintained and some presence will be established such as continuing to hold Scout meetings at Grace and First, having the MLC at First etc. We will have the sexton keep each property clean and in good shape while we are in this interim time. The Merger Task Group recognizes the risk of vandalism during these interim times. Obviously, both churches are always at risk of break-ins and vandalism. We hope to minimize that risk by: regular check-ins at both buildings, regular usage by groups, and a consistent presence by

members by providing upkeep on the grounds and gardens. The ministers and administrative assistant will follow the proposed schedule as far as where to conduct office hours. Further details will be given under the ‘Personnel’ section.

E. Weekly Operations

We propose that after approval of the merge, a steering committee be appointed immediately. This will be made up of the two pastors and two elders – one from each former congregation as recommended by the pastors. The steering committee will administer details of weekly operations. The new Session will decide at what point this committee is no longer needed.

F. After the Sale of One or Both Properties

In the case that one property sells and the congregation permanently resides at the other property, the Session will determine how we will renovate/design the property. This will provide upgrades that are needed and also create an improved worship space for the congregation.

G. Special Items

The Merger Task Group recognizes the sentimental and financial value of specific items owned by each congregation. Just as in selling a home, the Session can exclude items from a sale which will have a financial impact on the value of the building. The Session, with advice from their real estate agency or agencies, may determine to remove, store, and preserve certain items, or include those items in the sale of the property.

II. Personnel

A. Immediate Action

After the approval to merge, all non-ordained staff will turn in their

resignations immediately and will be eligible to apply for the new positions. New job descriptions will be made for the following staff:

1 full-time administrative assistant will be hired for 37 ½ hours per week. It is the desire of the Merger Task Group that the church has an administrative assistant at the church during normal office hours and one pastor readily available. Also, we would like for the administrative assistant to have or develop skills in maintaining the church website.

1 sexton

3 nursery workers

1 organist

1 choir director

2 full time Co-Pastors

It will be the duty of the Co-Pastors and the two previous chairs of Personnel to interview and hire the employees. After the immediate transition period, the new Session will establish personnel policies, develop job descriptions, and compose a manual of operations.

B. Co-Pastors' Responsibilities and Division of Duties

The Merger Task Group believes it is in the best interest of the new church to keep both pastors for a transition period. Their duties, for at least an interim amount of time, would include leading youth ministry and developing a comprehensive Christian Education program. These duties are reflected in the Co-Pastor job description. (see Appendix 1)

“A particular church, with the consent of presbytery, may elect pastors to serve as co-pastors in exercising the responsibility of minister of Word and Sacrament for the congregation.” (G-6.0602c)

“A congregation may call more than one minister to serve as pastor or associate pastor, sharing duties within the congregation as agreed upon by the session and approved by the presbytery, using co-pastor or co-associate pastor or other suitable titles. When there are co-pastors, the presbytery, the ministers, and the session shall agree on a schedule for sharing the times each will moderate. When a particular church has two pastors serving as co-pastors and the relationship of one of them is dissolved, the other remains as the pastor of the church.” (G-14.0512)

III. Finance

A. Presentation of Current and Combined Budgets
(see Appendix 2)

B. After approval, the new Session, through the Stewardship Committee, will develop a plan for members to pledge their time, talents, and money in 2011.

IV. By-laws and Covenants of Agreement

A. Review of By-laws and Covenants of Agreement
(see Appendix 3)

The Mission of the Merged Church

“We can do more together than separately.”

Thriving churches find ways to use their buildings all days of the week. The purpose of a mission(s) would be out of love for Christ and not just as a means to grow the congregation. Several opportunities exist for these types of mission:

- Mentoring for Bowie Elementary School
- Bi-lingual worship services and outreach
- Community garden for nearby residents

- Provide office space for Presbyterian Children's Home and Services
- ESL training

We can look into grants to pursue some of these missions through Grace Presbytery and/or a private grant writer. In 2011, the new Session will discern how to direct the church's energy and resources.

Congregational Meeting on January 30, 2010

Upon 2/3 approval of those present in each congregation on January 23, 2011, signs will be posted and communications will be published to announce a congregational meeting for January 30, 2011. This will be held at the current Grace Presbyterian Church building since this occurs in the liturgical season of Epiphany. Several items of business must be conducted including:

1. Approval of terms of call for Co-Pastors
2. Name of the New Church
The Merger Task Group nominates 5 names for consideration: Unity Presbyterian Church; Greenville Presbyterian Church; Faith Presbyterian Church; Providence Presbyterian Church; Covenant Presbyterian Church. Nominations for other names may be given in writing and from the floor. We will vote by show of hands. The name receiving the lowest percentage of votes will be eliminated until we have a name with 51% approval.
3. Election of the new Session
All current Session members from both churches will be asked if they wish to be considered for the new Session. We will then put all the names of the willing elders from First into one offering plate and the names of the willing elders from Grace into a second offering plate. We will draw 6 names from each church. These 12 will be asked to serve for the year of 2011 only. This new Session will then arrange for the election of a Nominating Committee

to nominate classes of elders for the years of 2012, 2013, and 2014 which will be approved by the merged congregation.

By-Laws

Preface

The By-Laws of the United Presbyterian Church of Greenville, Texas as a corporation shall always be subject to the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, and also to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Article I Organization of the Church

Section 1 - Introductory

These By-Laws are intended to define the organization and procedure of United Presbyterian Church in areas not defined in the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and to place in the hands of each member a brief summary of the Form of Government. The General Rules of Judicatories as outlined in the Presbyterian Form of Government shall be the rules adopted for guidance of this church and its various organizations; and the Form of Government and the Book of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), shall be adopted by this church. In the event of any conflicting provisions hereinafter listed, the Form of Government of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall be the final authority.

Section 2 - Officers and Governing Boards

The officers and governing boards of the church shall include:

- Pastor(s)
- Session
- Trustees

Section 3 - Terms of Elected Offices

The term of office for elders and trustees shall be three (3) years, elected in three (3) classes with an equal number in each class. No officer shall serve

on any church board for consecutive terms, either full or partial, aggregating six (6) years. Upon the expiration of a full term of service, any officer shall be ineligible to re-election to the same office until one (1) year shall have elapsed. All officers of the church shall be active members of the church.

Section 4 - Vacancies

Removal from the church community shall automatically vacate any church office when in the judgment of the Session an incumbent cannot adequately carry out the duties of the office he/she holds. Any resignation must be acted upon by the Session. Vacancies occurring in any elective office may be filled by a vote of the congregation at any duly called meeting of the congregation. If emergency demands, the Session may make a temporary appointment until a meeting can be properly called.

Article II Meetings

Section 1 - Stated Meetings

There shall be a regular annual meeting of the congregation to elect the officers and to transact other business which may properly come before said meeting. Notice shall be given from the pulpit at least two (2) Sundays before said meeting and announced through the Sunday church bulletin two (2) Sundays immediately preceding said meeting.

Section 2 - Special Meetings

Special meetings of the congregation may be held at any time upon the call of the Session or the Presbytery. The time and specific purpose of such meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least two (2) Sundays before said meeting and announced through the Sunday church bulletin two (2) Sundays immediately preceding said meeting.

Section 3 - Presiding Officer

The pastor(s) shall preside at all congregational meetings. If the church is vacant, or if the pastor(s) and the elders agree that the subjects to be discussed requires it, or if the pastor(s) is/are ill or is otherwise unable to be present, a minister of the Presbytery of jurisdiction shall be invited by the Session to preside. This invitation shall be cleared through the Committee on Ministry of the Presbytery.

Section 4 - Secretary

The Clerk of the Session shall be the Secretary of the meeting of the congregation. In the absence of the Clerk, the Pastor presiding shall designate an acting Clerk in his/her stead.

Section 5 - Voting

All active members shall be entitled to vote at congregational meetings. Only active members of United Presbyterian Church shall be entitled to vote at meetings of the church corporation. Voting by proxy is not allowed.

Section 6 - Quorum

The quorum of a meeting of the congregation shall not be less than one tenth of the members unless the particular church upon application to the presbytery shall obtain the consent of the presbytery for a smaller quorum. A congregation by its own vote may fix a higher quorum. No meeting of fewer than three members shall be considered a congregational meeting. (G-7-0305)

Article III Election of Officers

Section 1 - Eligibility

Any resident active member of the church shall be eligible for the office of Elder.

Section 2 - Nominating Committee

A Nominating Committee shall be named each year as soon as the Session and various organizations of the church have been able to complete their organization. This committee shall be composed as follows:

- Two (2) active Elders elected by the Session from the membership; one (1) of whom shall be elected by the Session as Chairperson
- One (1) active member from the Women's Association
- One (1) active member from the Men's Association
- One (1) active member of the congregation elected by the congregation

The pastor(s) shall hold ex-officio membership (with voice but no vote). The committee, in the fall, shall proceed with the matter of nominating officers to be presented at the Congregational Meeting called for the election of officers.

Section 3 - Nominations

No later than six (6) weeks prior to the annual meeting of the congregation for the purpose of electing officers, the Nominating Committee shall request the submission of any suggestions for nominations from the church members. At this point, the willingness of the nominee to serve will not need to be verified by the person making the suggested nomination. Two (2) weeks following such public announcement of the opening of nominations, the Nominating Committee shall begin its work of preparing a list of nominees for the respective vacancies. Due consideration shall be given to all suggested nominations presented to the committee as well as names generated by the committee itself. Nominations shall be determined by a consensus or a majority vote of the committee.

Section 4 - Posting of Nominees

On the two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the election, the names of all persons nominated by the committee, and the names of all outgoing officers shall be listed in the Sunday church bulletin. No nominations may be posted without the consent of the person nominated to accept the office if elected.

Section 5 - Nominations from the Floor

Nominations may be made from the floor. Those nominated from the floor will be considered if the nominee is present to consent to serve, or has previously indicated a willingness to serve.

Section 6 - Election by Ballot

All elections shall be by ballot unless the Moderator, by majority vote of the congregation, be directed to call for a voice vote.

Section 7 - Election Procedure

Nominees receiving the highest number of votes, and not less than a majority of all votes cast for any particular office, shall be declared elected. The congregation may in any election, on motion, eliminate the names of one or more nominees receiving the smallest minority after the first ballot.

Section 8 - Ordination and Installation of Officers

The ordination and installation of elders and the installation or recognition of all other officers of the church shall be observed at the morning service on a date to be determined by the Session.

Article IV The Session

Section 1 - Composition

The Session shall consist of the pastor(s) as Moderator and twelve (12) Elders, each elected for a term of three (3) years, with a class of four (4) elders being elected each year.

The Session for the first year of the newly merged church shall consist of six (6) members of Session from each church to comprise the twelve (12) elders; such that a total of six (6) from 1st Presbyterian and six (6) from Grace Presbyterian make up the twelve (12) serving Elders of the newly merged United Presbyterian Church.

All current Session members from both churches will be asked if they wish to be considered for the new Session. All names of the willing elders will be

placed into an offering plate (separate plates for each church) and six (6) names will be drawn from each plate. These twelve (12) will serve for the year of 2011 only. This new Session will then arrange the election of a Nominating Committee to nominate classes of elders for the years 2012, 2013, 2014, to be approved by the merged congregation.

Section 2 - Duties

Duties are as outlined in the Book of Order (G-10-0102).

Section 3 - Meetings

The Session shall ordinarily meet once each month. The pastor(s) shall also convene the Session in special meetings on due notice when he/she deems advisable or when requested to do so by any two (2) of the active elders. If a Session member misses three (3) stated meetings during the year with an unexcused absence, the position will be considered vacated.

Section 4 - Quorum

A quorum of the Session shall be the pastor or other presiding officer and one third of the elders but no fewer than two, except for the reception and dismissal of members, when the quorum shall be the moderator and two members of the Session. The Session may fix its own quorum at any higher number. (G-10.0202)

Section 5 - Clerk

The Session shall annually elect a clerk of Session whose term shall be one (1) year.

Section 6 - Standing Committees

At the first Session meeting following the ordination and installation of elders, the Session shall organize itself for the year by naming both Session members and active members of the church to the Standing Committees. The Standing Committee membership shall be composed of non-Session

members. The committee chairperson will be a Session member. The Standing Committees are responsible to the Session for their several areas of responsibility. The Session may receive the recommendations of the committees for action, or by the power of delegated authority empower a committee to act with the authority of the Session in areas specifically designated and duly recorded in the Session minutes, subject always to the review and final authority of the Session.

The Standing Committees are:

- Worship
- Christian Education
- Fellowship and Nurture
- Mission and Evangelism
- Stewardship and Finance
- Property
- Multisensory Learning Center (MLC)
- Personnel

Worship

The mission of the Worship Committee is to plan, implement, and supervise activities conducive to meaningful public and private worship. This committee is responsible for working with the pastor(s) in the structuring of the worship service, in accordance with the guidelines established in the Directory for Worship in the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.); preparing the physical facilities and elements for all worship, including the observance of the sacraments; supervision of the Choir Director and Organist; recruiting, training, and organizing the auxiliary personnel necessary for worship services, such as ushers, communion servers, and candle lighters; and securing pulpit supply ministers as needed.

Christian Education

The mission of the Christian Education Committee is to plan a meaningful total church education program for all members of the church to the end that all may grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This committee is responsible for securing and training leadership, as well as finding, evaluating, and procuring appropriate curriculum and necessary supplies for all educational activities of the church. The Christian Education Committee is thus responsible for the Sunday church school; non-Sunday

educational activities; Vacation Bible School; youth groups; supervision of a Director of Christian Education, if applicable; supervision of a Youth Minister, if applicable; the nursery, including proper staff and equipment; and maintaining the church library.

Fellowship and Nurture

The mission of the Fellowship and Nurture Committee is to facilitate communication and interaction between the members of the church family. This committee is responsible for church family nights and fellowship dinners; church-wide retreats or picnics; athletic programs, activities, and organizations; adult organizations; communications (i.e. church newsletter); and care of members.

Mission and Evangelism

The mission of the Mission Committee is to supervise the planning and implementation of programs and activities which shall facilitate the church's witness to and evangelism of those persons who are not active members of the church, that they might be brought to Christ and active membership in the church. This committee is responsible for overseeing the continual seeking, welcoming, and visiting non-members of the church; preparation and dissemination of publicity to make the community aware of the presence of the church, its programs and mission; planning, promoting, and supervising benevolent outreach efforts which will demonstrate the church's commitment to the teachings and ministry of Jesus Christ.

Stewardship and Finance

The mission of the Stewardship Committee is to plan, implement, and supervise programs and activities which will encourage the development of every member's time, talents, and financial resources in service to Jesus Christ and His Church. The Stewardship Committee shall oversee the interpretation and subscription of the annual church budget; provide for year-round interpretation of stewardship both in local church and higher judicatories; provide for the mechanics of gathering and counting the offerings and for keeping full records of income and expenditures; make recommendations to the Session concerning special offerings and facilitating the collection and accounting of those offerings; annually review the church roll; and cause an annual audit to be made of the financial records of the

church, in conformity with the provisions of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Property

The mission of the Property Committee is to plan for and provide suitable physical facilities for use by the church, its members, and organizations, and for approved community programs and/or organizations. This committee is responsible for the general maintenance and repair of the church properties; contracting and supervising all janitorial and lawn services; ensuring the security, to the extent possible, of the physical property and contents; planning to ensure that sufficient space and appropriate facilities will be available to support the present and future programs and activities of the church. All recommendations or requests for modifications, improvements, or additions must be considered by this committee before final Session approval.

Multisensory Learning Center

The responsibilities of the Multisensory Learning Center (MLC) Committee are to recommend a Director for the Learning Center every three (3) years; make policies for the approval by the Session; implement approved policies; provide a financial statement to the Session on a monthly basis; provide qualified therapists, facilities, and supplies for the learning center; encourage the development of adequate funding for the MLC to include scholarships for students and therapists; and provide a teacher training program when practical.

The MLC committee shall consist of seven (7) members including at least one (1) elder and six (6) members of the church. The Pastor and the Director shall be ex-officio members of the committee.

The members of the MLC committee shall be selected and approved by the Session on an annual basis. However, the MLC committee can make recommendations for membership to the Session.

The MLC Committee, as the governing body for the Session, shall have the responsibilities for the above.

The MLC has a Book of Policies.

Personnel Committee

The mission of the Personnel Committee is to coordinate the expectations of the staff of the church and the congregation. This includes ordained and non-ordained staff. The Personnel Committee will consist of the chairs from Worship, Property, Christian Education, a representative from Stewardship, the clerk of Session, and the pastor(s). Under the direction of the Session, the committee will meet at least annually with every staff member to review their performance. The committee has the responsibility to suggest changes in compensation for employees and terms of call for the pastor(s). This committee will annually review, update, and create job descriptions for all staff. The Personnel Committee will also supervise the administrative assistant.

Article V Trustees

Section 1 - Election/Composition

The congregation will elect a Board of Trustees composed of three (3) members who may be any active members of the church. Each person will be elected for a three (3) year term, one (1) being elected each year upon nomination by the Nominating Committee. The election will normally be held at the congregational meeting when Session members are elected.

Section 2 - Chairperson

The chairperson of the Trustees shall be the “senior” member of the Board (i.e., the person whose term expires at the end of the current year).

Section 3 - Meetings

The Trustees will meet on the call of the chairperson. The chairperson will call a meeting when directed to do so by the Session.

Section 4 - Duties

The duties of the Trustees are to serve as officers of the corporation. The Trustees will perform such corporate functions as assigned by the Session and duly recorded in the Session's official minutes. Such functions shall be in conformity with the laws of the State of Texas and the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Article VI The Pastor(s)

The pastor(s) shall function in accordance with provisions of the Book of Order of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and shall have ex-officio membership in all Standing Committees of the Session.

Article VII The Sacraments

The sacraments of the church shall be observed at the appointed time as determined by the Session.

Article VIII Special Funds, Gifts, and Solicitations

The income from funds held in trust for any specific estates, trusts, gifts, and solicitations for any specific object shall be applied to the purpose for which the funds were given. When the stipulations of the donor have been met, any unexpended portion of these funds may be transferred to the general fund by the Session.

The right is reserved to the Session to reject any proffered gift which it deems unsuitable or inappropriate for the church to receive.

Article IX Roster & Records

It is the duty of every organization or department affiliated with the church to file annually with the Session all membership lists, minutes, and records involved in their work.

Article X Amendments

The By-Laws may be amended by a two-thirds (2/3) vote at any duly called meeting of the congregation. Proposed changes must be in accord with the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Proposed changes shall be published in the Sunday church bulletin on the two (2) Sundays immediately preceding the meeting.