



From our Executive Director,
Clancy Cruise

Greetings from my church family to yours! Access2018 in Fremont, Ohio once again promises to be an opportunity to re-new friendships and reengage cohort conversations.

These conversations at conference last year advanced a new day in our fellowship where we are committed more and more to be in collaboration and conversation about what's working well in our particular spaces and which ideas are transferable church to church, state to state ministry to ministry. What a great day it is when we can lay down our fears and pride and truly learn from one another the things that God is doing to advance the gospel through our churches and ministries.

Be sure to take look at the list of opportunities to connect with brothers and sisters in your area passion and ministry and sign up soon.

It'll be great to be in a local church setting once again. Fremont proved to be an awesome host and a great example of a church having a huge impact on its community. Thanks Fremont! We look forward to being back in your amazing space for a few days together.

As you know, our Fellowship Council has commissioned a group of leaders to present position statements on various issues of culture, theology and practice for our fellowship and for the delegates to approve. We have a list of position statements that we will be bringing forward. We greatly appreciate the feedback we have received.

Attached are business reports for delegates from our partnering churches. I know that we would all rather celebrate than do business, but there are a few things we need to care for. Please familiarize yourself with the agenda for our business meeting. Please make a special effort to be at this important meeting.

I look forward to the rest of 2018 and on into 2019 where at various meetings, and particularly at our regional Focus Retreats where we will be able to engage in conversations about how we are implementing the convictions and ideas conveyed in our Identity Statement. Please make these meetings a top priority in your ministry calendar. We need your heart, your ideas and your voice in these important conversations.

With humble hearts and honest dialogue I know we will move the ministry of the gospel forward with power and impact on into the next decade. We are prepared and positioned as a fellowship to have a greater impact than ever before. Bring a positive and loving attitude to conference and I know that God will bless us with a great united vision for planting churches and raising up new leaders for generations to come. Believe it with me! Thanks so much for your service to our fellowship. See you in a few weeks!

Clancy

Reports...

Agenda	1
2017 Statistics	2
2018 Member Church List	3
2017 Financial Statements	4
Social Concerns Committee	5
2018 Resolutions	6
Chaplains Endorsing Report	7
Retirement Planning Committee	8
Manual of Procedure Amendments	9
Position Statements	10
Fellowship Council Highlights	11
Bios for Ballot	12

On separate pages:

- **Ballots**
- **Budget for 2019**

Agenda

Thursday, July 26 at 12:30 p.m.

- 1) Membership report and action to seat delegates
- 2) Executive Director ratification and Fellowship Council elections (paper ballot)
- 3) Ratifications of Treasurer and Secretary and appointments (paper ballot)
- 4) Nominating Committee for 2019 (paper ballot)
- 5) Amendments to the Manual of Procedure (paper ballot)
- 6) The 2019 Budget (voice vote)
- 7) Recommendations of new member churches:
 - (a) Three Creeks Church – Gahanna, Ohio (voice vote)
 - (b) Grace Fellowship Church – Brunswick, Ohio (voice vote)
 - (c) Legacy Church – Kendallville, Indiana (voice vote)
- 8) Executive Director's Address – Clancy Cruise
- 9) Position Statements (Paper Ballot)
- 10) New Resolutions (voice vote)
- 11) Election Results

Statistical Report for 2017

Presented to the 2018 Conference

(includes statistical reports received through July 1, 2018)

	2017		2016	2015	2014
	Avg	Total			
# of Churches in the FGBC (7/1/18)		234	238	238	249
# reporting statistics		174	188	194	194
Attendance	219	42,574	43,331	42,204	42,281
Small Group	79	14,749	14,910	13,727	15,494
Recorded Conversions	13	2,440	2,548	2,408	2,553
Baptisms	10	1,962	1,803	1,571	1,608
Total Members	121	22,946	22,444	22,519	22,991

Churches added since last report (4)

Main Street Church - Chelsea, Michigan
 Layland Church - Layland, Ohio
 Lexington Fox Hollow - Greenwich, Ohio
 Ashland Village - Ashland, Ohio

New churches - not yet members (3)

Three Creeks Church – Gahanna, Ohio
 Grace Fellowship Church – Brunswick, Ohio
 Legacy Church – Kendallville, Indiana

Churches deleted since last report (7)

Withdrew CA,Lancaster,Iglesia Cristiana La Cosecha
 Closed FL,North Miami,Église Chrétienne Rocher du Salut
 Closed IA,Davenport,Grace Brethren Church
 Closed KS,Wichita,Grace Brethren Church of Wichita
 Closed NC,Durham,Iglesia Cristiana La Cosecha
 Closed PA,Chambersburg,Solid Rock Community Church
 Closed VA,Virginia Beach,Grace Community Church

Churches that were adopted since last report (1)

CA,Alta Loma,Grace Fellowship of Alta Loma

Report #2

FGBC MEMBER CHURCH LIST

(as of July 1, 2018)

Listed by: State, City, Church Name, 2017 Avg. Worship Attendance/Membership

AB,Bow Island,Bow Island Community Bible Church: 25/15
AB,Medicine Hat,Grasslands Church: 63/28
AK,Anchorage,Dimond Grace Fellowship: 18/15na
AK,Eagle River,Eagle River Grace: 166/98
AK,Kenai,Kenai Grace Brethren Church: *
AK,Soldotna,Peninsula Grace Brethren Church: 189/97
AK,Sterling,Sterling Grace Brethren Church: 30/5
AZ,Peoria,ValleyLife Grace Brethren Church: 40/82
AZ,Tonalea,Native New Life Ministries: *
BC,Surrey,Community of Hope: 92/65
CA,Auburn,Auburn Grace Community Church: 700/342
CA,Bellflower,Bellflower Brethren Church: 200/105
CA,Canyon Lake,New Hope Community Church: *
CA,Cherry Valley,Grace Fellowship: 30/41
CA,Chico,Chico Grace Brethren: 119/82
CA,Lakewood,Iglesia Cristiana De la Comunidad: 49/36
CA,Long Beach,Community Grace Brethren Church: 41/44
CA,Long Beach,Grace Brethren Church of Long Beach: /
CA,Long Beach,Grace Cambodia Church: *
CA,Long Beach,Los Altos Grace Brethren Church: 150/130
CA,Modesto,La Loma Grace Brethren Church: 80/n/a
CA,Norwalk,Grace Brethren Church of Norwalk: 95/95
CA,Orange,Grace Church of Orange: 378/195
CA,Rialto,Sunrise Mission: *
CA,Ripon,Ripon Grace Brethren Church: 172/176
CA,San Diego,Grace Brethren Church: 34/27
CA,Santa Ana,Maranatha Grace Brethren Church: 42/35
CA,Seal Beach,Grace Community Church of Seal Beach: 333/351
CA,Simi Valley,Grace Brethren Church: 434/243
CA,South Pasadena,Grace Brethren Church of S. Pasadena: 79/39
CA,Tracy,Grace Brethren Church Of Tracy: *
CA,Whittier,Community Grace Brethren Church: 42/41
CA,Whittier,Grace Brethren Church of Whittier: 55/28
CA,Yucca Valley,Grace Community Church: 41/20
CO,Colorado Springs,Grace Brethren Church: 32/29
CT,Wethersfield,CenterPoint Community Church: *
DC,Washington,About My Father's Business: 67/67
FL,Brooksville,Grace Brethren Church: 65/45
FL,Deerfield,Family Christian Community Center: 15/15
FL,Fort Lauderdale,New Calvary Evangelical Church, Inc: *
FL,Fort Myers,Friendship Grace Brethren Church: 27/20
FL,Fort Myers,Villas Grace: 50/28
FL,Lauderdale Lakes,Eglise Evangélique de la Paix: 30/30
FL,Melbourne,Grace Brethren Church - Suntree: 75/60
FL,Miami,Mispa Missionary Community Church: 15/15
FL,Ormond Beach,Grace Community Church: 39/30
FL,Pinellas Park,Grace Brethren Church of Pinellas Park: 85/n/r
FL,Port Richey,Gulfview Grace Brethren Church: 186/124
FL,Sebring,Grace Church of Sebring: 190/104
FL,Tampa,Iglesia Comunal Cristiana: 148/80
FL,Valrico,Iglesia Comunal La Esperanza: *
HI,Mililani,Waipio Grace Brethren Church: 100/100
HI,Waipahu,Grace Fellowship Hawaii: 390/150
IA,Cedar Rapids,CR Grace Church: *
IA,Dallas Center,Dallas Center Grace Brethren Church: 22/28
IA,Garwin,Carlton Brethren Church: *
IA,North English,Pleasant Grove Grace Brethren Church: 15/13
IA,Waterloo,Grace Fellowship Church: 133/121
IN,Berne,Bethel Brethren Church: 60/86
IN,Columbia City,Community of Hope Grace Brethren Church: 140/41
IN,Elkhart,Fuente de Vida Grace Bilingual Church: 70/70
IN,Fort Wayne,Grace Brethren Church: *
IN,Goshen,Grace Community Church: 2238/444
IN,Howe,Brighton Chapel Brethren Church: 287/141
IN,Kokomo,Indian Heights Grace Brethren Church: *
IN,Leesburg,Leesburg Grace Brethren Church: 89/53
IN,Osceola,Grace Brethren Church: 261/87
IN,Union City,DayStar Grace Brethren Church: 25/25
IN,Warsaw,Community Grace Brethren Church: 200/150
IN,Winona Lake,Winona Lake Grace Brethren Church: 823/725
KS,Portis,Grace Brethren Church of Portis: 65/47
KY,Clayhole,Clayhole Grace Brethren Church: *
KY,Hyden,Victory Mountain Grace Brethren Chapel: *
KY,Jackson,Happy Church: 88/n/r
MA,Essex,North Shore Bible Church: 94/52
MD,Clinton,Clinton Grace Brethren Church: 263/263
MD,Easton,Mid-Shore Community Church: 24/28
MD,Frederick,Grace Community Church: 400/n/r
MD,Hagerstown,Calvary Grace Brethren Church: 44/33
MD,Hagerstown,Cornerstone Community Church: 89/73
MD,Hagerstown,Maranatha Brethren Church: 145/142
MD,Hagerstown,Valley Grace Brethren Church: 229/102
MD,Lanham,Grace Brethren Church: 65/53
MD,Leonardtown,The Point of Grace Church: 65/80
MD,McHenry,Grace Brethren Church: 9/5
MD,Mechanicsville,Grace Chapel Ministries of Southern MD: 230/275
MD,Owings,Grace Brethren Church: 470/432
MD,Waldorf,Grace Brethren Church: 315/400
MI,Chelsea,Main Street Church: 60/n/r
MI,Detroit,St. Antoine Bible Church: 15/15
MI,Lake Odessa,Grace Brethren Church: 25/25
MI,Menominee,Menominee Grace Brethren Church: *
MN,St. Paul,Twin Cities Church: *
NJ,Hope,Grace Community Church: 45/50
NM,Taos,Grace Brethren Church of Taos: *
NY,New York,New Generation Community Church: 36/90
OH,Akron,Grace Church of Greater Akron - Bath Campus: 5220/639
OH,Ashland,Ashland Village Community Church: *
OH,Ashland,Eastgate Bible Church: 25/60
OH,Ashland,Grace Brethren Church: 1082/708
OH,Ashland,Grace Ranch: 15/
OH,Ashland,Southview Grace Brethren Church: 202/200
OH,Ashland,Woodside Church: 8/8
OH,Blacklick,East Side Grace Brethren Church: 595/350
OH,Bowling Green,Grace Church of Bowling Green: 40/23
OH,Brookville,Brookville Grace Brethren Church: 91/72
OH,Canton,Grace Brethren Church: 157/112
OH,Centerville,Centerville Grace: 226/64
OH,Clayton,Grace Bible Church: 40/40
OH,Columbus,Capital City Grace Church: 22/30
OH,Covington,Friendship Grace Brethren Church: 58/70
OH,Danville,Grace Church: *
OH,Dayton,Basore Road Grace Brethren Church: 61/78
OH,Dayton,Calvary Grace Brethren Church of Dayton: 20/12
OH,Dayton,First Grace Brethren Church: *
OH,Dayton,North Riverdale Grace Brethren Church: 12/23
OH,Delaware,Delaware Grace: 407/171
OH,Dublin,Encounter Church: 85/n/a
OH,Dublin,Grupo Amor Cristiano: *
OH,Dublin,Northwest Chapel Grace Brethren Church: 460/140
OH,Fremont,Grace Community Church of Fremont: 1830/1734
OH,Greenville,Greenville Grace Brethren Church: 320/173
OH,Greenwich,Fox Hollow Bible Church: *
OH,Grove City,Grace Chapel: *
OH,Grove City,Southwest Grace Brethren Church: 63/58
OH,Hilliard,Movement Church: 231/75

OH, Homerville, Grace Brethren Church of Homerville: 107/101
 OH, Huber Heights, Grace Community Church: 176/154
 OH, Jacksontown, Grace Brethren Church of Jacksontown: *
 OH, Kettering, Calvary Grace Brethren Church: 28/28
 OH, Killbuck, Layland Church: *
 OH, Lexington, Grace Brethren Church: 94/80
 OH, London, London Grace: *
 OH, Macedonia, Western Reserve Grace Church: 710/252
 OH, Mansfield, Grace Village Church: *
 OH, Mansfield, Woodville Grace Brethren Church: 175/104
 OH, Marion, Marion Grace: 80/55
 OH, Marysville, Marysville Grace Brethren Church: 946/290
 OH, Maumee, Maumee Valley Church: N/A/58
 OH, Middlebranch, Grace Brethren Church: 149/78
 OH, Millersburg, Grace Brethren Church of Millersburg: 41/39
 OH, Minerva, Grace Chapel: 421/220
 OH, Mt. Sterling, Sterling Grace Brethren Church: *
 OH, Mt. Vernon, Grace Community Church: *
 OH, Pataskala, Pataskala Grace Church: 149/95
 OH, Pickerington, Grace Fellowship - Pickerington Campus: 3160/958
 OH, Plain City, Darby Grace Brethren Church: 60/50
 OH, Powell, Grace Church: 868/301
 OH, Reynoldsburg, White Stone: *
 OH, Rittman, Grace Brethren Church: 113/108
 OH, Tipp City, The Bridge: 14/20 *NoStaff Listed*
 OH, Toledo, Toledo Grace Brethren Church: 24/30
 OH, Twinsburg, LifeSprings: 15/0
 OH, West Alexandria, Grace Brethren Community Church: *
 OH, West Milton, Community Grace Brethren Church: *
 OH, Westerville, Grace Polaris Church: 1383/863
 OH, Wooster, Grace Church : 1943/1400
 ONT, Mississauga, Renew Church - Mayfield West: 425/220
 PA, Altoona, First Grace Brethren Church: 35/63
 PA, Armagh, Valley Grace Brethren Church: 40/
 PA, Avis, Grace Fellowship: 67/83
 PA, Bethlehem, Lehigh Valley Grace Brethren Church: 90/86
 PA, Blain, Grace Brethren Church of Sherman's Valley: 19/25
 PA, Chambersburg, Grace Brethren Church: 65/43
 PA, Coatesville, Encuentro Latino: *
 PA, Conemaugh, Conemaugh Grace Brethren Church: 37/34
 PA, Dillsburg, Hope Grace Brethren Church: 187/112
 PA, Duncansville, Grace Fellowship Church: 377/193
 PA, Elizabethtown, Grace Brethren Church: 110/105
 PA, Ephrata, Ephrata Area Grace Brethren Church: 82/53
 PA, Everett, Community Grace Brethren Church: 195/171
 PA, Everett, Everett Grace Brethren Church: 52/80
 PA, Greencastle, Community Grace: 35/75
 PA, Hollidaysburg, Vicksburg Grace Brethren Church: 48/n/a
 PA, Hopewell, Hopewell Grace Brethren Church: 61/49
 PA, Johnstown, Davidsville Community Church: *
 PA, Johnstown, Johnstown Grace Brethren Church: 20/50
 PA, Johnstown, Liberty Grace Brethren Church: 170/52
 PA, Johnstown, Pike Grace Brethren Church: 132/108
 PA, Johnstown, Singer Hill Grace Brethren Church: 102/113
 PA, Kittanning, Grace Brethren Church of W. Kittanning: 78/74
 PA, Lancaster, Grace Church at Willow Valley: 296/176
 PA, Lititz, Grace Church - Lititz Campus: 355/321
 PA, Loganville, Community Cornerstone Church: 41/18
 PA, Manheim, Manheim Grace Brethren Church: 105/75
 PA, Martinsburg, Martinsburg Grace Brethren Church: 517/322
 PA, Meyersdale, Meyersdale Grace Brethren Church: 156/179
 PA, Meyersdale, Summit Mills Grace Brethren Church: 94/108
 PA, Myerstown, New Beginnings Grace Brethren Church: 119/96
 PA, New Holland, Grace Family Church: 158/95
 PA, Palmyra, Grace Brethren Church: 150/102
 PA, Parkesburg, Gateway Grace Community Church - Parkesburg
 Campus: 643/304
 PA, Philadelphia, Crossroads Community Church of Philadelphia -

Holmesburg: 112/N/A
 PA, Philadelphia, Grace Community Bible Church: 70/60
 PA, Pottstown, Still Waters Grace Brethren Church: *
 PA, Red Hill, Hope Valley Community Church: *
 PA, Reedsville, Kish Valley Grace Brethren Church: 218/150
 PA, Saxton, Living Hope Grace Brethren Church: 36/n/r
 PA, Telford, Penn Valley Church Multi-Site Network HQ: 405/n/a
 PA, Tremont, Echo Valley Grace Brethren Church: 83/64
 PA, Uniontown, Grace Brethren Church: *
 PA, Waynesboro, Grace: 104/56
 PA, Wrightsville, Susquehanna Grace Community Church: 135/53
 PA, York, YGBC: 123/72
 SC, Aiken, Grace Church: 150/161
 SC, Anderson, Grace Fellowship Church: 40/37
 TN, Johnson City, Fountain of Life Bible Church: *
 TX, Longview, Grace Brethren Church: 39/17
 TX, McAllen, McAllen Grace Brethren Church: *
 VA, Alexandria, Grace Brethren Church: 45/42
 VA, Buena Vista, First Brethren Church: *
 VA, Covington, Grace Brethren Church: /
 VA, Norfolk, Awaken Church: 65/n/a
 VA, Radford, Fairlawn Grace Brethren Church: 40/73
 VA, Richmond, Community of Grace Church: 68/50
 VA, Riner, Riner Grace Brethren Church: 25/28
 VA, Roanoke, Clearbrook Grace Brethren Church: 24/30
 VA, Roanoke, Ghent Grace Brethren Church: 51/41
 VA, Roanoke, Hope Bible Church: 77/
 VA, Roanoke, Washington Heights Grace Brethren: *
 VA, Winchester, Blue Ridge Grace Brethren Church: 62/92
 VA, Winchester, Winchester Grace Brethren Church: 120/n/a
 WA, Goldendale, Community Grace Brethren Church: 118/50
 WA, Grandview, Iglesia Vida Nueva: *
 WA, Harrah, Harrah Grace Brethren Church: 29/23
 WA, Kent, Grace Fellowship of Kent: 43/n/r
 WA, Mabton, Iglesia De Los Hermanos: *
 WA, Mabton, Mabton Grace Brethren Church: 74/49
 WA, Sunnyside, Grace Brethren Church: 144/133
 WA, Toppenish, Grace Brethren Church: 48/39
 WA, Yakima, Iglesia De Los Hermanos en Yakima: *
 WV, Grafton, First Grace Brethren Church: 44/44
 WV, Martinsburg, Rosemont Grace Brethren Church: 80/56
 WV, Parkersburg, Grace Brethren Church: 33/11
 Count = 234
 (* = statistical report and/or fellowship fee not returned in time for this report)

Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches Statement of Financial Position

31-Oct-17

ASSETS	
Cash	\$ 197,974
Accounts Receivable - net of allowance	12,871
GBIF Investment	236,357
Receivables	
Prepaid Expenses	
Total Current Assets	\$ 447,202
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	\$ 23,529
Accrued Payroll Expense	1,519
Deferred Revenue	6,235
Pension Liability	3,394
Escrow Funds	85,649
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 120,326
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted	\$ 326,876
Temporarily Restricted	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 447,202

Statement of Activities

Year ending October 31, 2017

UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	
Revenues	
Membership Fees	\$ 211,303
Conference Income	76,711
Eagle Commission	71,709
Contributions	117,303
Focus Retreats	21,079
Handbook Income	3,700
Other Income	4,203
Net Assets Released from Use Restriction	
Total Revenue	\$ 506,008
Expenses	
Program Services	
Conference	\$ 129,230
Focus Retreats	65,051
Eagle Commission	70,856
Supporting Services	
Fellowship Council	88,673
General Administration	126,965
Total Expenses	\$ 480,775
Increase (Decrease) in Unrestricted net assets	\$ 25,233
Increase (Decrease) in Temporarily Restricted net assets	
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	301,643
Net Assets at End of Year	\$ 326,876

Notes:

Payroll expenses are allocated to Conference, Focus Retreat and General Admin exp. Categories.

Reviewed by Himes and Krull, LLC

Report #4

2018 Report of the Social Concerns Committee

The Social Concerns Committee is a creation of the National Conference of the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches (Charis Fellowship). It was originally established in 1980 as the “Sanctity of Life Committee.” In 1985 the committee assignment was broadened and the committee was renamed the “Social Concerns Committee” in recognition of the need to address additional issues where biblical teaching and Christian ethics and theology intersect with societal and governmental issues.

The Social Concerns Committee has ONE specified duty according to the Manual of Procedure: “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: [seven guidelines follow]” (Art. V, Sec. 5).

This responsibility has been consistently fulfilled each year since the inception of the Social Concerns Committee.

Delegates to the business session must understand that **once a resolution is approved, it is no longer simply a resolution proposed by the Social Concerns Committee. It is now an ADOPTED RESOLUTION by the Charis Fellowship, and represents our convictions on a matter of important concern.**

Since the governing system of the FGBC/Charis Fellowship is congregational, the adopted resolutions do not have any controlling power. Their main values, as people read them, are pedagogical and a statement to Christians and non-Christians on the moral implications of the Gospel. Local churches are encouraged to adopt these resolutions as their own. Local churches should then make them known to their membership and throughout their spheres of influence and, as practical, put them into action.

In addition to proposing resolutions, the Social Concerns Committee’s ministry has included:

- Monitoring cultural and religious trends in America
- Seminars and Writings
- Regular communication to the pastors and other leaders of our churches through emails on current issues, thinking and challenges
- Responses to inquiries from churches and individuals on specific issues
- Assisting churches in social concerns activism
- Being an influence throughout our Fellowship to increase awareness, commitment and involvement
- Producing, with legal assistance, a model church policy on weddings

Let us all devote ourselves to good Christian citizenship, to a strong and constructive church presence in our communities, to seeking the “shalom” of our communities, and to seeking to “love our neighbor as ourselves” via all the implications of what we call “Christian Social Concerns.”

Please contact the Social Concerns Committee whenever we can be of service to you.

Respectfully submitted,

Donald P. Shoemaker, Chairman

Mark Abel, Mark Combs, Scott Henry, Mike Jentes, Kathryn MacMillan, Jesús Muñoz,

Richard Schnieders, John Teevan

Resolutions Proposed to the 2018 Business Session of the Charis Fellowship

Prepared by the Social Concerns Committee

Civility in Government and in Professional and Personal Life

Genuine civility moves past simple politeness or pragmatic concerns and sees those with whom we disagree as full equals before God. It enables us to hold the respectful dialogues without which democratic decision-making is impossible. Civil people approach their government institutions with awe and gratitude. Civility is both the duty not to do harm and the duty to do good.

Civility cares for one's own identity, needs and beliefs without degrading others in the process. It is about disagreeing without disrespect, seeking common ground as a starting point for dialogue about differences, listening past one's preconceptions, and asking others to do the same. Civility is the hard work of stopping to listen even with those with whom we have deep-rooted and fierce disagreements.

God's "Common Grace" (the gifts and abilities he bestows to all mankind) enables all people to practice civility. God's "Regenerative Grace" enhances the ability of Jesus' followers to treat others rightly.

Meaningful civility begins at the top—communication by the White House and Executive Branch, by members of Congress, and other government officials, whether federal, state or local. The tone set by leaders, and (when appropriate) rejected by leaders, will affect political and personal discourse throughout the country.

We look with alarm at the deterioration of communication, especially good face-to-face communication, in today's political climate. Therefore, we call on political leaders to be honest and respectful in their political rhetoric, and to duly honor other political leaders in spite of political differences and flaws. We urge communication that truthfully focuses on issues and avoids harmful *ad hominem* characterizations of people.

Meaningful civility must also exist in the news media and in personal communications, especially in the use of social media. Commentators and reporters must separate facts from rumor and opinion and strive for helpful and wholesome communication at all times. Social media must be used with honesty and care. "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen" (Ephesians 4:29). "Let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger" (James 1:19). Our churches need to teach and model this continually. Communicators should strive for "Golden Rule Communication."

We condemn all acts of incivility, including outright violence and destruction, and denying others their constitutional right to free speech and freedom of association and assembly.

Sources: *Civility* by Stephen L. Carter (Harper Perennial, 1998); Institute for Civility in Government

Immigration

Recognizing that:

- a. All people are made in the Image of God,
- b. Respect for the rule of law is essential in a civil society,
- c. Secure borders are the right and need of every nation,

- d. Israel was frequently reminded by God that she should show mercy to the immigrant because she, too, was once an oppressed and exploited people,
- e. The prophets in Scripture demanded special compassion to the exploited and vulnerable, including the "alien in the land",
- f. Our nation is populated by people from a multitude of cultures and lands, and
- g. The presence of undocumented immigrants in this country (and in our churches) is a fact and a complex issue not easily resolved,

(1) We therefore call on our churches to give prayer, thought, discussion and action toward addressing the problem of the undocumented immigrant in a God-honoring way. On this issue we must "Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly" (Micah 6:8).

(2) We recognize the divisive and controversial nature of this debate and we encourage dialogue in the churches that is respectful, open-minded and solution-focused.

(3) We further call on our churches to be the "reconciling presence of Christ" in the midst of a broken system that creates rancor, resentment, racism, selfishness, fear, exploitation, danger and disregard for law.

- (4) We call on our society and elected leaders to rise above political posturing and rancor to work toward a solution on immigration that:
- a. Respects the God-given dignity of every person,
 - b. Rejects the nativism that ignores the love of God for all and our country's history of immigration and openness to the foreigner, as captured in the words enshrined on the Statue of Liberty,
 - c. Protects the unity of the immediate family and seeks the best interests of native-born children of undocumented immigrants,
 - d. Respects the rule of law,
 - e. Holds employers accountable for ensuring the legal status of workers,
 - f. Creates secure national borders,
 - g. Ensures fairness to taxpayers,
 - h. Develops a generous and fair "guest worker" program,
 - i. Protects all immigrants from exploitation and violence, and
 - j. Establishes a pathway toward legal status and/or citizenship for those who qualify and who wish to become permanent residents or citizens—a pathway that both achieves justice and loves mercy.

We recognize that meaningful solutions to this problem are not easily reached. We also recognize the solutions must come through a determined will to reach them and must not be ignored time after time, year after year.

Protection of Human Life

Human life is sacred before God and receives his explicit protections in Scripture. Human life is precious and deserving of protection from conception through death. Abortion and legalized "mercy killing" are contrary to the Bible's pro-life ethic. While those who are terminally ill deserve appropriate medical care, including palliative care and pain management, medically assisted suicide is not a moral option.

Definition of Marriage

When Jesus taught on marriage (Mark 10:6-9) he said (1) “God made them male and female” (Genesis 1:27) and (2) “the two will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). Thereby, a new bond is formed intended for a lifetime (Mark 10:8-9). Without the two realities of “male and female” and covenant union, no true marriage bond has been created. Jesus spoke to oppose the easy divorce culture of his time. His words continue to be relevant to that and as a critique of new definitions of marriage.

We affirm, based on Jesus’ teaching and the broad teaching of Scripture, that marriage is intended by God as a life-long covenant between one man and one woman.

Gender Identity

While gender identity has been a topic in academic and political circles for some time, we note with concern the sudden change in the popular understanding of gender.

We also recognize that biblical teaching on gender is not vague nor is it a casual side issue in scripture. Gender is connected to God’s creation and our humanity. “God created man in his own image...male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). This is foundational and non-negotiable.

We must understand societal trends but must not yield to a cultural understanding of gender superficially based on civil rights. This issue must be addressed from a biblical foundation. This discussion will help us discover how we can shape the specifics of our understanding of scripture and shape our role in a society that is ever more distanced from biblical understanding.

Furthermore, we must see the challenge secular thinking on gender identity poses for inculcating biblical values to our children and for religious liberty. We must withstand pressures against churches and religious institutions to abandon biblical beliefs and practices in favor of secular ones.

Religious Freedom

We express grave concern over the erosion of genuine religious liberty around the world and even in the United States. Anti-blasphemy laws, violence against Coptic Christians in Egypt, and ISIS-inspired violence in the Middle East are major concerns.

We affirm Article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a strong and useful statement on religious liberty: “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.”

Current challenges to religious freedom include intrusion of government into the hiring standards of religious institutions, loss of certification and/or accreditation to religion-based educational institutions and requiring religious institutions to provide insurance coverages that violate their core convictions.

Religious freedom includes the right of religion-based institutions (churches, schools, hospitals, charities and others) to operate free of government coercion in practicing their beliefs. This includes the right

of religion-based institutions to set doctrinal and moral expectations for their participants and employees (not just for their ministers).

Religious liberty must extend beyond the walls of the church (“freedom of worship”) to include the freedom of all religious people (not just clergy) to live out their beliefs in their personal, public and vocational lives.

Through our prayers, education and activism, we commit ourselves to opposing religious persecution and protecting religious liberty in our nation and throughout the world.

Law Enforcement In Society

We live in a free and open society made up of sinful men and women. Since sinful people are involved, regulation and controls must be in place to protect members of society, including the most vulnerable. Law Enforcement is one of those controls.

Law Enforcement must go into places and situations that most of society does not want to even know about. Law Enforcement Officers leave their own families at all hours of the day and night to protect society from those who desire to take advantage of society and even hurt or kill societal members.

“Every Person is to be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God. (Romans 13:1). God has ordained and appointed civil authorities at all levels of governments in every nation. These civil authorities include Law Enforcement.

Law Enforcement Officers are servants of God, accomplishing the mission of protecting and preserving society and its members. This mission may require the use of deadly or near deadly force to protect the law enforcement officer or others from death or serious harm. While it is painful and difficult for Law Enforcement Officer to use deadly force, they are trained and prepared to do so when necessary.

The Church is called by God to be the lighthouse in society, which includes support of God’s appointed ministers. Thus, the Church must lead our communities in support and appreciation of Law Enforcement. However, this does not mean blind support regardless of the facts and circumstances. Law Enforcement Officers make mistakes, some even commit crimes, and these must be held accountable. The church must recognize this and caution society not to castigate every Law Enforcement Officer because of the wrongs of a few.

The Social Concerns Committee

Donald Shoemaker, Chairman
Mark Abel
Mark Combs
Scott Henry
Mike Jentes
Kathryn MacMillan
Jesus Muños
Richard Schnieders
John Teevan



The Eagle Commission

Charis Fellowship dba Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches

P.O. Box 814, Winona Lake, IN 46590-0814 • Phone: (574) 267-5162 • Fax: (574) 269-4066

SUBJECT: Endorsing Agent's Report, July 2018

Since Access2017, I have had the privilege of representing our Chaplains and the Eagle Commission at all five Focus Retreats, the Grace College Conference on Missions in October 2017, speaking at several local churches, personally visiting about half of our chaplains at their duty stations, attending three board meetings, and two conferences for endorsing agents. I've been encouraged to learn of the tremendous love and interest in the ministry of our chaplains and their families and their appreciation of our fellowship.

End of Year Giving (2017) to the Eagle Commission increased thanks to several significant donations from foundations. The Eagle Commission also received an estate gift in January 2018. While giving trends are up in 2018, there remains a need for churches to support this ministry which literally touches thousands of men and women serving in the military, as well as our veterans, bringing the Gospel to where they serve and live.

Key events this year include:

- Reassignments. Air Force Chaplain George Youstra (Brighton Chapel Brethren Church, Howe, IN) to U.S. Special Operations Command, Tampa, FL; Army Chaplain Jim Murray (Grace Church, Aiken, SC) to U.S. Army Chaplain School (student status), Ft Jackson, SC; Army Chaplain Richard Hurst (Grace Brethren Church, Colorado Springs, CO) to Fort Carson, CO. See also Key Assignments below.
- Deployments. Air Force Chaplain Phil Smith (Auburn Grace, Auburn, CA) deployed to Turkey in November 2017 for one year; Navy Chaplain Justin Hayes (Winona Lake GBC, Winona Lake, IN) deployed with Mediterranean Fleet from December 2017 to May 2018; Army Chaplain Charles ("Chuck") Pridgen (Community GBC, Warsaw, IN) deploys in late July to Kuwait for a scheduled nine month deployment.
- Promotions. Two of our men were promoted to Major: Army Chaplains John Jacobsen (Grace Community Church, Seal Beach, CA) and Pete Stone (Fountain of Life Bible Church, Johnson City, TN).
- Key Assignments. Two of our men were selected to serve as faculty to train, coach and mentor the military's newest chaplains: John Jacobsen (Grace Community Church, Seal Beach, CA) reported in April to the U.S. Army Chaplain School at Fort Jackson, SC and Justin Hayes (Winona Lake GBC, Winona Lake, IN) reports in July to the Navy Chaplaincy School and Center at Fort Jackson, SC.
- Ordination. Army Reserve Chaplain Candidate Daniel Rosenberg (Community GBC, Warsaw, IN) was examined and recommended for ordination. This will allow him to become a chaplain.
- Loss. Army Reserve Chaplain Mike Landers (formerly of Grace Community Church, Seal Beach, CA) submitted an Unqualified Resignation to pursue other ministry options.

Finally, I ask for your prayers and regular intercession for our chaplains who serve our military and veterans that they will be faithful to the divine calling and always in the Lord's protection as they and their families minister to our nation's sons and daughters. I also strongly urge all supporters and pastors to pray fervently for new men from our fellowship who will serve as chaplains. We need our most qualified and physically fit young men to reach the men and women of our Armed Forces with the Gospel of peace!

On mission! By grace!

Mark Penfold, DMin.
Chaplain (Colonel), U.S. Army, retired
Endorsing Agent

FELLOWSHIP OF GRACE BRETHREN CHURCHES
RETIREMENT INVESTMENT PLAN
PO BOX 634
WINONA LAKE, IN 46590
574-267-5163

Retirement Planning Committee

As of **June 30, 2018**, the total combined asset value of the Fellowship Retirement Investment Plan was **\$17,855,565.47**. Currently, we have **377** participants in the plan.

Thirty-four investment options are available to plan participants along with the Roth contribution that was added this past Spring. Quarterly, individual reports are sent on a timely basis.

Account information is available on-line via a secure website at www.oneamerica.com. We have met with One America representatives to review our plan and discuss ways to improve our cooperative services.

Respectfully submitted:

Mr. Kenneth A. Seyfert, Chairman
kseyfert@gbif.com

Committee Members:

Mr. Tom Avey
Mr. Ryan Howell
Dr. James L. Custer
Mr. James W. Johnson

Administrative Assistant:

Mrs. Sue Lehman

Changes to the Manual of Procedure.

Motion: to amend the Manual of Procedure to change the words “Statement of Faith” to “Charis Commitment to Common Identity” in the following locations:

1. Article IV; Section One; 1.f
2. Article IV; Section One; 2.f
3. Article VI; Section One; 1.a
4. Article VI; Section Two; 1.a
5. Article VI; Section Three; 3.

Introducing Charis Fellowship ...

Position Statements

At the 2016 National Conference in Toronto, our Fellowship of churches unanimously adopted the Commitment to Common Identity document as the official Identity Statement for our movement. While the Identity Statement is a summary of our internationally shared biblical convictions, mutual commitments, and common practices, it is not intended to address the specific issues that may need to be stated within each national context.

What is a Position Statement?

Position Statements are concisely worded paragraphs developed by the Fellowship Council that provide biblical clarification of specific issues of culture, theology, or practice within the ministry context of North America. Each Position Statement addresses an issue that the Fellowship Council representatives agree is necessary and helpful for our Fellowship. They are intended to provide clarity while preserving unity by only expressing what is broadly held in common by Charis Fellowship churches. While diversity of viewpoints can make it a challenging task, the Fellowship Council believes that Position Statements will be of great benefit to the Charis Fellowship.

Are Position Statements different from Resolutions?

For many years the Social Concerns Committee has provided our Fellowship with valuable teaching and statements on a variety of social issues. These important Resolutions will continue to be developed as the needs arise. Resolutions are exclusive creations of the Social Concerns Committee and provide non-binding guidance, while Position Statements carry greater weight as Charis Fellowship churches agree to “cooperate harmoniously within the parameters outlined by the Charis Commitment to Common Identity and the Position Statements.” Some resolutions may be reframed and adjusted by the Fellowship Council as the basis of new Position Statements.

How are Position Statements created and adopted?

This process of developing Position Statements takes place under the authority of the Fellowship Council. When the need for a Position Statement is identified and agreed on, a Position Statement Team is formed under the leadership of the Executive Director and approved by the Fellowship Council. A detailed Process Document has been developed by the Fellowship Council to guide the overall process. This document is available upon request. Position Statements approved by the Fellowship Council will then be presented to delegates at the next National Conference and require a 2/3rd's vote for approval. Each year additional Position Statements will be developed as needed. Each Position Statement adopted by the Fellowship must be reviewed and presented to the delegates for a reaffirmation vote every five years (or less as needed). If no action is taken, the Position Statement will be dropped.

The Position Statement Process Development document is available upon request using the contact form at charisfellowship.us.

Feedback? Questions? Post those here: <https://goo.gl/3KWS8c>

The following Position Statements affirmed by the Fellowship Council will be presented to delegates at the 2018 annual meeting of the Charis Fellowship (a.k.a. Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches, inc)...

Affirmation of Life

We affirm that human life is sacred and worthy of respect. From the moment of conception, human life is precious and deserves protection from murder, suicide, abortion, and mercy killing. We affirm that those who are terminally ill deserve appropriate medical care, including palliative care and pain management, but medically-assisted suicide is not a moral or biblical option.

Ordinances

Charis Fellowship churches practice baptism by triune immersion. Our communion celebrations follow a three-fold pattern, which includes (1) the practice of washing the saints' feet and, (2) the partaking of the bread and cup and, (3) sharing the fellowship meal. We believe these ordinances have biblical and historical foundations and should be taught and practiced in our local churches.

Marriage and Sexuality

We believe God created marriage to be a public covenant relationship, normally consummated by the union of sexual intercourse, between two consenting people, one man and one woman. This covenant is to endure as long as both are living for the purposes of mutual care, mutual joy, mutual edification, procreation, and symbolizing the covenant relationship between Christ and His church to all generations. We affirm that all sexual relations of any kind that occur outside the boundaries of marriage are immoral and contradict God's design for humanity.

Eldership

We believe that the leadership position in our local churches corresponding to the biblical role of elder/overseer/pastor is reserved for men who meet biblical qualifications. We affirm that men and women are both created in the image of God, are equal in value and personhood, and are designed to be inter-dependent in life and ministry within the local church.

Revised - June 4, 2018

Highlights from the January 2017 Fellowship Council meeting.
Location – Seal Beach, California

Overview: Meetings began Wednesday evening January 31 with dinner and a season of prayer. Thursday, February 1 was for reports from our National Ministries and from the various commissions of the council. Friday concluded those reports and the council acted on recommendations.

Results:

1. The council approved membership applications for
 - a. Three Creeks Church of Gahanna, Ohio
 - b. Legacy Church of Kendallville, Indiana
 - c. Grace Fellowship of Brunswick, Maryland

Note: requires delegate approval.

2. The council approved a list of potential candidates for the next Executive Director of the Charis Fellowship. One name will be presented to delegates for approval.
3. The council unanimously approved position statements for consideration by delegates at Access2018 on: Affirmation of Life, Ordinances, Marriage and Sexuality, Eldership.
4. The council began consideration of a request from Assist Church Expansion for national ministry status. Discussion is ongoing.

2018 Fellowship Council And Executive Director

Nominee Biographical Data

Executive Director



The Fellowship Council is excited to nominate Pastor Phil Sparling to be become the Executive Director of the Charis Fellowship, beginning a three-year term after Access2019.

Phil is Senior Pastor at Grace Community Church, Auburn Calif. This church was launched by three families (one of which was Phil's parents) and now welcome 700 people to worship each Sunday. Phil and Ruth have four young-adult children. Phil served on the Fellowship Council from 2007-2010 and has been a leader in the Northern California District. Phil was recognized as "Pastor of the Year" by the Association of Grace Brethren Churches in 2012.

Fellowship Council Region A



Love God Completely, Love Others Compassionately, Love Self Correctly... The vision statement for Ripon Grace Church exposes the man behind it, Pastor Rex Rodgers. Rex throws boundless energy into pursuing this formidable goal

while encouraging and equipping others to do the same. Rex loves Jesus and believes in the power of the Gospel to change lives and satisfy the deepest needs of the human soul—healing, forgiveness, and unconditional love. He brings a unique creativity and hands-on approach to ministry. Before obeying God's call to the pastorate, Rex worked as an electrician for twelve years, proficient as both a technician installing wires and as a foreman administrating the big jobs. He knows a thing or two about leading large groups of people. Rex and his wife Alli have seven beautiful, intelligent children. Rex is currently working on his Masters of Arts in Local Church Ministry through Grace Seminary Deploy.



Manuel Espinosa is Pastor of Iglesia Cristiana de la Comunidad in Lakewood, California. He was born in Mexico and came to the United States in 1983 at the age of 24. Manuel came to know the Lord that

very same year at the church that he now pastors. God saved Manuel from a life of alcohol and drug addiction, immediately after conversion he started preaching in the streets and to friends at the painting company where he worked. Manuel has had the privilege of working with prisoners in Terminal Island Federal Institution in the city of San Pedro California for the past ten years. Manuel and his wife Raquel and have four children. They met at a Baptist church in Wilmington California where Rachel

came to know the Lord. Together they have been serving God at Iglesia Cristiana de la Comunidad for almost 20 years.

Fellowship Council Region B



Jonathan serves as Community & Connections Pastor and on the Senior Staff Leadership Team at Grace Polaris Church after originally joining Grace's pastoral staff in 2006 as Young Adults Pastor. A native Buckeye from northeast Ohio, Jonathan met his wife, Kim, at Grace Polaris, where she has been connected since childhood. Jonathan studied business (Grace College) and theology (Grace Seminary) before serving as Associate Pastor at Community of Hope (Columbia City, IN) and working in management for a leading multi-national corporation in northern Indiana. In addition to spending time with his family, Jonathan enjoys the outdoors, water sports, handy-man projects, and commiserating with Cleveland Sports fans. Jonathan and Kim have three elementary aged children.



Bill serves as the pastor of Living Hope GBC. After graduating from Grace Seminary M. Div, he was the pastor of the Grafton GBC before joining the staff at Martinsburg Grace Brethren Church to plant Living Hope. Bill is married to Linda, who loves the outdoors, hunting & camping.

Fellowship Council Region C



Rich serves as the pastor of Friendship Grace Brethren Church. He holds a Ph.D. in Christian Philosophy and Apologetics, a Theology Masters and a Bachelor of Biblical Studies.

Why only one name from Region C? Districts have the privilege of nominating names to the Fellowship Council. This year, only the Florida district nominated (Rich S). The FGBC nominating committee can add names but they felt that there was sufficient representation from other districts in region A.