

Sovereign Grace Churches Council of Elders
Meeting Minutes
November 17, 2025

1. **Call to Order.** Mark Prater, Executive Director, called the meeting to order on Monday , November 17, 2025 at 1:05pm in Orlando, FL.
 - a. **New Churches Recognized.** Mark Prater recognized new churches joining Sovereign Grace: Igreja Graça Soberana de Rio Grande (Brazil, Emerson Suarez), Sovereign Grace Church (Nairobi Kenya, Brian Kiama) Family of Grace Church (Thailand, Fred Wendelmeier), Vine Church (Tampa Florida, Mario Figueroa), Christ Community Church (North Knoxville TN, Josh Varnedoe), Hope Community Church (Springhill TN, Howard Varnedoe), Trinity Church (Galloway NJ, Eric Huber), Emmanuel Church (Coatesville PA, Nathan Smith), Cross of Grace Church (North Manchester IN, Adam Penird), Center Church (Star ID, Jeff Palen)

2. **Roll Call.** Mark Prater conducted roll call. 68 of 75 US delegates were present, representing a quorum. 11 of 23 Emerging Nation delegates were also present.

3. **State of the Union.** Mark Prater gave the annual State of the Union address for Sovereign Grace Churches.
 - a. Mark announced the planned and pending transition of Executive Director to Jon Payne.
 - b. Dave York (Chair of the EC) represented the EC in putting Jon's name forward, per BCO 8.5.6.1 and 10.1.3.5.
 - c. Jon made comments to the CoE.

4. **Leadership Team Updates.** The following leadership team members presented updates.
 - a. Jared Mellinger (Publishing)
 - b. Dave Taylor (Global)
 - c. Jon Payne / Jeff Purswell (Pastoral Development Course)

5. **Recognize the Rules Committee.** The Rules Committee (per BCO 8.4.1.2) has three members from the Polity Committee. The members for this meeting were Marty Machowski, Aaron Law, and Bruce Chick. Chad Haygood serves as secretary of amendments.

6. **Conduct the vote for the Executive Committee candidates.** The delegates voted on 4 open positions. The following committee members were added/re-elected: Bruce

Chick, Abelardo Muñoz, Dave York, and Mike Plewniak.

7. **Conduct the affirmation vote for the Polity Committee candidates.** Jake Simmons and Jeremy Hetrick were affirmed for 3-year terms.
8. **Conduct the affirmation vote for the Court of Appeals candidates.** Pete Payne and Josh Tong were affirmed for six-year terms.
9. **Conduct the affirmation vote for the Response Committee for Sexual Misconduct candidates.** Marty Machowski and Loren Venhuizen were affirmed for three-year terms.
10. **Conduct the affirmation vote for the Theology Committee candidate.** Shawn Woo was affirmed for a three-year term.
11. **Report from the Executive Committee.** Dave York(chair) gave an update.
12. **Report from the Theology Committee.** Jeff Purswell (chair) gave an update.
13. **Report from the Response Committee for Sexual Misconduct.** Derek Overstreet(chair) gave an update.
14. **Report from the Court of Appeals.** Josh Tong(chair) gave an update.
15. **Report from the Polity Committee.** Aaron Law(chair) gave an update.
16. **Discuss and affirm the proposed amendments to the Book of Church Order.** Mark Prater moderated the presentation of proposed amendments to the BCO. Amendments to the BCO are governed by Section 8.5.3. The BCO, as amended, is available at www.SovereignGrace.com
17. **New Business Motions.**
 - a. 2026 Council of Elders Meeting. The 2026 meeting was approved to be online on October 29, 2026 from 6.00-9.30pm EST.
 - b. Ordination Principles presented by Jon Payne were affirmed by majority vote.
 - c. Church Adoption Process presented by Jon Payne was affirmed by majority vote.
18. **Present and affirm the Sovereign Grace budget for fiscal year 2026.** Mark Prater presented the FY25 budget for affirmation by the CoE. The executive committee reviewed and approved the budget at their retreat in August 2025. The budget was

affirmed by unanimous vote.

19. **Updates from the Executive Director.** Mark Prater presented final updates.

20. **Other Business.** None.

21. **Adjourn.** The meeting was adjourned at 8:26pm on November 17, 2025.