

Fostering Relationship Covenant

xxxxxxx Baptist Church

xxxxxxx Baptist Church

xxxxxxxxxxxxx Baptist Association

April 202x – September 202x

We the leadership of xxxxxxxx Baptist Church, xxxxxxxx Baptist Church, and the xxxxxxxx Baptist Association do enter into this covenant to glorify God, edify the Church, and further God's kingdom through this foster care covenant of relationship.

In this covenant, we commit to pray for each other, support each other, speak highly of each other, and empower each other to do the tasks necessary to enable both churches to grow healthier and thrive in ministry for years to come.

This covenant will become effective (estimated date) around April 1, 202x and be in effect through September 202x. The covenant will be in place for an eighteen-month period of time. There will be evaluation periods at each six-month interval (September 1, 202x and February 1, 202x). The purpose of the evaluation period is to:

- Gauge progress
- Evaluate strategies
- Make adjustments to the fostering plan
- Celebrate God's blessings
- Pray for what lies ahead

During the two evaluation periods, both churches will decide to (1) continue on with the agreement or to (2) exit the agreement.

To that end, the leaders representing and affirming the desire of xxxxxxx Baptist Church and the xxxxxxx Baptist Association do agree to assist and support xxxxxxx Baptist Church in the following ways:

1. We will provide pastoral leadership for the fostering period. xxxxxxxx Baptist Church, Pastor xxxxxxxx, will serve as the fostering pastor during the partnership agreement. Associational Mission Strategist xxxxxxxx (xxxxxxx Baptist Association) will serve both churches as a consultant/advisor.
2. xxxxxxx Baptist Church will work with xxxxxxx Baptist Church to implement healthy systems and processes in all areas of church life, through the following methods:
 - Evaluation and analysis of current systems and processes, recommending/establishing improved practices for positive health and development, modeling these healthy systems and processes and equipping member leaders within xxxxxxx Baptist Church to manage these systems for future ministry effectiveness.
 - Providing leadership in the implementation of all systems and strategies. xxxxxxx Baptist Church understands and willingly accepts temporary decision-making leadership from xxxxxxx Baptist Church for the duration of the foster care partnership agreement, that includes, suspending their current by-laws for the period of the covenant and agreeing to the **Revitalization/Fostering Bylaws** (Pages 7-10).
 - xxxxxxx Baptist Church will maintain an intentional and focused ministry of prayer, support, and love for xxxxxxx Baptist Church, which will be shown in tangible ways during the Fostering Relationship Covenant.
3. xxxxxxx Baptist Church will have consistent, ongoing foster care leadership meetings for providing weekly worship service(s), building trust, identifying areas that need attention and focus, and implementing strategies designed for community missional effectiveness; while, sharing progress reports or concerns that need to be addressed with the xxxxxxx Baptist Association.
4. Form a Leadership Team consisting of up to three leaders from xxxxxxx Baptist Church and three to five members from xxxxxxx Baptist Church.

5. Hold joint Leadership Team evaluation meetings to gauge progress and to address any concerns that have been raised.
6. xxxxxxxx Baptist Church will communicate with xxxxxxxx Baptist Church in person, quarterly during this process in a town hall/church family gatherings, and more often in written form, in order to pray together and celebrate what God is doing, to keep each church apprised of the progress being made and to hear and address any questions or concerns.

xxxxxxx Baptist Church agrees with the above stipulations and in doing so, affirm the following:

1. We agree to accept the pastoral leadership and worship ministry offered by xxxxxxxx Baptist Church. xxxxxxxx Baptist Church will provide xxxxxxxx Baptist Church with pastoral leadership and guidance in all decision-making processes, including church polity and finances, for the duration of the partnership, believing that xxxxxxxx Baptist Church and the xxxxxxxx Baptist Association continually have xxxxxxxx Baptist Church's best interests and God's glory at heart in what they determine God is leading them to do.
2. xxxxxxxx Baptist Church will continue to be financially responsible for all expenses incurred by the church, including providing a salary for the fostering pastor and the fostering worship leader.
3. xxxxxxxx Baptist Church commits to supporting and abiding by the agreements set forth in this agreement throughout the entirety of the process understanding that the goal is to bring stability to the church family while implementing healthy, life-giving systems and processes designed to give xxxxxxxx Baptist Church a bright and hopeful future.
4. We will accept and embrace the modeling, coaching, and equipping of xxxxxxxx Baptist Church and the xxxxxxxx Baptist Association during the duration of this fostering agreement. We accept guidance and equipping from xxxxxxxx Baptist Church and the xxxxxxxx Baptist Association as we strive to improve and strengthen our church for the future.

5. We will coordinate with the leadership team on the development of our budget and present a yearly budget to the congregation for approval.
6. We agree to be trained, encouraged, and equipped by xxxxxxxx Baptist Church and the xxxxxxxxxx Baptist Association for future effectiveness and ministry of xxxxxxxxxx Baptist Church.
7. We also will have an ongoing relationship of prayer, support, and love for xxxxxxxxxx Baptist Church and for the xxxxxxxxxx Baptist Association.

Together we at xxxxxxx Baptist Church, xxxxxxx Baptist Church, and the xxxxxxx Baptist Association agree to the following:

1. We will jointly agree, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, that our goal is for xxxxxxx Baptist Church to become a healthy, vibrant, impactful New Testament church making disciples in the community where God placed them. For that to become a reality will include:
 - A current community assessment (current demographic analysis)
 - Making prayer a priority
 - Accepting an honest evaluation of our current spiritual reality
 - Development of a disciple-making strategy/pathway
 - Having a history/heritage review
 - A renewed emphasis upon Sunday worship and attendance
 - Membership requirements
 - Small group/Sunday School involvement
 - A refocus and recommitment on missional community engagement
 - A review/update of church bylaws
 - A review of church stewardship and budgetary processes
 - A renewed commitment to community engagement and outreach
 - An evaluation of current facility needs

2. We at xxxxxxxx Baptist Church, xxxxxxxx Baptist Church, and the xxxxxxxxxx Baptist Association agree to celebrating through joint worship service this covenant relationship at the beginning, middle, and end of the agreement, as a means of expressing glory to God, partnership in the gospel, and gratitude for all that God has and will do.

3. All three parties agree not to end the process prematurely unless the following happens:
 - The benchmarks set at the beginning of the process have been met
 - The time of the covenant has been completed
 - Either church utilizes the exit agreement as outlined previously: *During the two evaluation periods both churches will decide to (1) continue on with the agreement or to (2) exit the agreement.*

We affirm, xxxxxxxx Baptist Church's desire to provide support and assistance for this defined period of time and that it does not desire to pursue a formal, permanent relationship with xxxxxxxx Baptist Church. The objective is to assist xxxxxxxx Baptist Church in such a way that it has a God-honoring, kingdom impacting , healthy body so that the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ will once again sound forth from this place. To that end, the goal is to love her, strengthen her, equip her, and empower her for God's glory and their own good.

However, if at some point during this covenant relationship, xxxxxxxxxx Baptist Church feels that it may be God's will and in the best interest of its own church to pursue a change in relationship from *fostering* to *re-constituting and replanting under a new name*, xxxxxxxx Baptist Church may initiate that conversation. No commitment of this will be predetermined on the part of either church before this time. Rationale would have to be based on the belief that (1) God is leading in this direction, (2) it would be a kingdom gain, and (3) it would be best for the people of both churches.

We, the undersigned, do affirm this covenant of expectations and responsibilities.

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____
(5) _____

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____

Church

Date

xxxxxxxxx Baptist Church
Church Revitalization/Fostering By-Laws
April 202x – September 202x

Article I. Membership

Biblical Authority - The Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of mankind. Further, we affirm a biblical definition of marriage between one biological man and one biological woman in an exclusive union before God designed for intimacy. Any form of sexual immorality is sinful and offensive to God and in need of repentance and forgiveness only found through the sacrificial death of Jesus and His subsequent victory over sin through the resurrection.

Members – This church is comprised of persons who profess a personal faith and belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, having received baptism in a church according to the New Testament, and actively follow the Lord Jesus Christ in discipleship.

Voting Rights of Members – Every member of the church is entitled to vote in all elections, provided the member is present. Proxy voting is prohibited.

Receiving Members – A person shall be considered a member upon approval of the church leadership team. A person may be received for membership by any of the following ways:

- By profession of faith. A person publicly confesses personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, giving evidence of a regenerate heart and adopting the covenant and the articles of faith and practices held by the church, shall, upon baptism, be admitted into the fellowship of the church.
- By statement. Any person who has been baptized upon profession of faith in a church of like faith, but because of loss of records or other unavoidable circumstances, has no letter to be transferred, may be received into membership after giving satisfactory evidence of a regenerate heart, Christian conduct, and scriptural faith. Any person presented for membership who has been baptized by immersion in a church of like faith shall be received by statement.

- By letter. Any person from another church of like faith may be received into membership upon receipt of letter of transfer from that respective church.

Rights of Members - Every member of the church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present. Every member of the church may participate in the ordinances of the church as administered by the church.

Termination of Membership – Membership shall be terminated in the following ways: (1) death, (2) transfer by letter to another church of like faith, (3) acknowledgement when a member has joined a church of another faith and has notified the church of their desire to no longer be a member, or (4) exclusion by action of the church.

Article II – Church Leadership Structure

The officers of the church during the period shall be as follows:

1. Fostering Pastor
2. Fostering Leadership Team
 - A. 2-3 Members from xxxxxxxx Baptist Church
 - B. 3-5 Members from xxxxxxxx Baptist Church

All decisions of the church during the fostering period will be made by the leadership team without a vote of the membership with the exception of:

1. Annual Church Budget
2. Acquisition or Disposal of Real Estate
3. Changes to the Constitution

Article III – Church Meetings

Quarterly Partnership Update Meetings – The pastor and leadership team shall hold quarterly meetings to update the congregation on the progression of the fostering agreement as well as to celebrate the blessings of the Lord throughout the fostering relationship.

Special Business Meetings – A specially called business meeting may be held to consider matters of significant nature. Notice of the subject, date, time, and location must be published at least one week before the meeting and announced at all services on the Sunday prior to the special called business meeting. Quorum – A quorum consists of those who attend the business meeting, provided it is a regular meeting or one that has been properly called.

Parliamentary Rules – The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall be the authority for parliamentary rules of procedure for all business meetings of the church in areas not addressed by the bylaws of this fostering relationship. The moderator, who will be someone from the leadership team, shall appoint a parliamentarian whose responsibility it will be to assure compliance with Robert's Rules of Order, and the bylaws when it is in the best interest of the fellowship.

Article IV – Ordinances

Baptism – Baptism is a symbolic act of obedience. A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith, who professes Him publicly in any worship service, and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism. (1) Baptism shall be by immersion in water. (2) Baptism may be administered by the Pastor or whomever he shall authorize. (3) Baptism shall be administered as an act of worship during any worship service.

The Lord's Supper – The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His second coming. (1) The Lord's Supper shall be observed at least quarterly. (2) The pastor shall be responsible for administration of the Lord's Supper.

Article V – Ministries

The church shall evaluate, plan, organize, and implement such ministries as the church deems necessary. The leadership team shall appoint ministry teams to lead areas of ministry as the church deems necessary to accomplish the vision and mission of the church.