

## XXXXXXXXXX and XXXXXXXX Foster Agreement

**NAMB “Fostering” DEFINITION** = a struggling church + a stronger church or churches + a defined relationship + a defined time frame (temporary) + the desire for the struggling church to regain health and autonomy.

**“Fostering” GOAL:** In a fostering relationship, a healthy, established church provides wisdom, support, and resources to assist a struggling church for a defined period, enabling the struggling church to regain vitality and achieve full autonomy.

### **CHARACTERISTICS of the “Fostering” Relationship:**

- A time-bound, temporary relationship in which a stronger church provides care for a struggling congregation
- A compassionate response to provide aid, not enlarging a campus or network church system
- Guided and guarded by a defined written agreement between the fostering church and the church being fostered
- The church being fostered willingly agrees to receive guidance and follow leadership
- A return to autonomy is the goal
- Any consideration of or a request for a formal partnership or permanent relationship is the responsibility of the fostered church to initiate

### **xxxxxxxxxx as the Fostering Church**

We, the fostering church, as God has graciously and abundantly blessed us over the past years, commit ourselves to use our collective heritage, wisdom and resources to come alongside the to-be-fostered church in a partnership for a period of up to 24 months, with the goal of restoring the health, vitality, and full autonomy of the to-be fostered church, if agreed-upon benchmarks are met.

We do not desire or seek to take over or incorporate the to-be-fostered church within our own church. Rather, we seek to help her once again be vibrant, gospel-centered, mission-focused, and kingdom-relevant in our region for the glory of God. Our sole intent in this process is to assist the to-be-fostered church through modeling, mentoring, equipping, and relationship to regain strength, health, and stability to once again be a Spirit-powered force in ministry and impact for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To that end, we pledge ourselves as brothers and sisters in Christ to serve them humbly as Christ has served us, lead them wisely as God has shown us, and bless them graciously as God has blessed us.

We are willing to offer the following for assistance during the time in question:

- Pastoral leadership and/or direction and assistance

- Modeling of healthy systems and processes
- Evaluation and analysis of current systems and processes
- Temporary volunteer mobilization
- Financial assistance and material resources, as stated in the financial agreements for this relationship
- An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support, and love
- Equipping of your own people/others to take the reins as we transition out

What we ask of the to-be-fostered church during the time in question:

- Adoption and acceptance of oversight by our church for the duration of the fostering agreement, to be agreed upon by both churches
- Willingness to appropriately budget for the process during the partnership, so that healthier systems and processes, along with its subsequent ministries, can take place, to be agreed upon by both churches
- Eagerness to observe, equip and implement emerging leaders for the fostered church's future, to be agreed upon by both churches
- An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support and love

#### **xxxxxxxxx as the Fostered Church**

We, the to-be-fostered church, as God has graciously and abundantly blessed us in the past, recognize that we are currently challenged and struggling in areas of church life and ministry. We corporately desire God to reverse this trend and commit ourselves to use our collective heritage, wisdom, and resources in partnering with a fostering church, for a partnership of up to 24 months to meet agreed-upon benchmarks for health and vitality as a church. We believe the best is yet to come.

To that end, we understand and believe that a fostering church has no desire to take over or incorporate us, the to-be-fostered church, within their own church. Rather, they seek to help us stand on our own once again, to be vibrant, gospel-centered, mission-focused and kingdom-relevant in our region for the glory of God. Their stated sole intent in this process is to assist us, the to-be-fostered church, through modeling, mentoring, equipping, and relationship to regain strength, health, and stability to once again be a Spirit-powered force in ministry and impact for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

To this end, we pledge ourselves as brothers and sisters in Christ to submit to them humbly as Christ has commanded us, learn from them wisely as God has invited us, and welcome them graciously as God has accepted us.

We are humbly and thankfully willing to receive the following assistance from a fostering church during the time in question:

- Pastoral leadership and/or direction and assistance

- Modeling of healthy systems and processes
- Evaluation and analysis of current systems and processes
- Temporary volunteer mobilization
- Financial assistance and material resources
- An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support and love
- Equipping of our own people/others to take the reins as they transition out
- What we give to the fostering church during the time in question:
- Adoption and acceptance of oversight of the fostering church for the duration of the fostering agreement, to be agreed upon by both churches
- Willingness to appropriately budget for the process during the partnership, so that healthier systems and processes, along with its subsequent ministries, can take place, to be agreed upon by both churches
- Eagerness to observe, equip and implement emerging leaders for our, the fostered church's, future, to be agreed upon by both churches
- An ongoing collegial relationship of prayer, support and love

**Fostering Church Covenant Between xxxxxxxxxx and xxxxxxxxxxxx from September 202x – September 202x.**

Both congregations will re-evaluate this agreement after two years.

We, the leadership of the fostering church and the fostered church do enter into 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.

To that end, the leaders representing and affirming the desire of the fostering church, do agree to assist and support the fostered church in the following ways:

1. We will provide pastoral leadership for the fostering period in question (as needed), including providing pulpit supply at least twice a month, and sending a worship leader/team once every two months for the Sunday services. A xxxxxxx leader will serve on the xxxxxxx Renewal board and attend board meetings. We will assist in finding a replanting pastor in partnership with the xxxxxxx Renewal board. We agree to participate in ongoing training by the associational renewal team, replanting workshops, and other resources.

2. Developing the congregational desire to participate in renewing a church:

- Introducing the congregations (congregational get-togethers)
- Joint prayer ministry (prayer walks in the neighborhood, shared 40 days of prayer)
- Rotating leadership and service teams into the fostered congregation's worship services

- d. Getting leaders to commit to supporting the fostering church
- e. Mission or workday support trips
- f. Joint outreach VBS and Children's events
- g. Joint men's and women's events and gatherings

3. We will work with the fostered church to implement healthy systems and processes in all areas of church life, through the following methods:

- a. Evaluation and analysis of current systems and processes, establishing improved practices for positive health and development, modeling these healthy systems and processes, and equipping member leaders within the fostered church to take charge of their ongoing function for the future
- b. Providing temporary volunteers to lead or assist in the implementation of these systems and strategies
- c. Providing a monthly financial supplement of 1% of our mission tithe to the fostered church to assist with the ongoing ministry support needed during this time, knowing that the fostered church has granted us the authority and is in agreement to budget and expend funds necessary to implement the systems, processes, and strategies necessary

4. We will maintain an intentional and determined ministry of prayer, support and love for the fostered church, which will be shown in tangible ways during this time.

5. We will hold special "progress evaluations" with the recognized church leadership at the fostered church (made up of the xxxxxxxx renewal board members) each six months to evaluate our joint efforts and address the concerns that have been raised.

6. We will communicate with the fostered church in person quarterly during this process in "town hall/church family" gatherings and more often in written and oral form, in order to pray together and celebrate what God is doing, to keep them apprised of the progress being made and to hear and address their questions or concerns.

Together, we at the fostering church and at the fostered church agree to the following:

1. We will jointly agree on benchmarks of a healthy church that we will, under the Lord's direction, seek to see achieved during the time of this covenant. These will include:

- a. Community assessment
- b. Priority of prayer and our spiritual condition
- c. Development of a disciple-making pathway
- d. History/heritage review
- e. Worship attendance
- f. Membership requirements
- g. Small group/Sunday school involvement
- h. Missional community engagement

- i. Giving mechanisms
- j. Outreach opportunities

2. We at the fostering church and at the fostered church agree to find and implement a joint way of celebrating this covenant relationship at both the beginning and the end of the agreement, as a means of expressing glory to God, partnership in the gospel, and gratitude for all He has and will do.

We affirm the fostering church's desire is to provide support and assistance for this defined period of time and that it does not desire to pursue a formal, permanent relationship with the fostered church. The objective is to help her find the ability to stand on her own again in a vibrant, healthy way, so the gospel may go forth from the fostered church as it did in the past, in boldness and the power of the Holy Spirit. To that end, the goal is to love her, strengthen her, equip her, and empower her for God's glory and their own good.

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

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Names

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Church

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Date

\*Note: Foster Agreement Adapted from the NAMB Fostering Guide.