

## **Proposed Foster Care Covenant**

We the leadership of:

Providence Church (“fostering church”)  
6339 Glenwood Ave.  
Raleigh, NC 27612

And

New Hope Baptist Church (“fostered church”)  
4301 Louisburg Road  
Raleigh, NC, 27604

do enter into covenant on the date of \_\_\_\_\_ to glorify God, edify the Church and further God’s kingdom through this “foster care” covenant of relationship. This covenant will have a duration of 18 months from the time it is signed and executed. 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.

### **Providence Church Commitments**

To that end, the leaders representing and affirming the desire of Providence Church (PC), do agree to assist and support New Hope Baptist Church (NHBC) in the following ways:

1. PC will be ultimately responsible for providing pastoral leadership for the fostering period in question. Since NHBC currently has an interim pastor, his role during this covenant will be mutually agreeable to both churches. He will serve in collaboration with the leadership of NHBC and PC. If NHBC, at any time within the “foster care” covenant agreement, is without a pastor (or interim Pastor), it agrees to work in partnership with PC to identify and hire a Pastor.
2. PC will seek to provide temporary volunteers to lead or assist in the implementation of proposed ministries, systems and strategies.
3. PC will provide financial support to NHBC, if deemed necessary by PC, to assist with the ongoing ministry support needed during the duration of the covenant. Budgeting and expenses will be governed by the decision-making process defined in point 5 of this section of the agreement.
4. PC will work with NHBC in an effort to implement healthy ministries, systems and processes in all areas of church life, through the following methods and suggested timelines:

#### **Months 1-3 (Assessment)**

- PC will enter into a designated time of guided prayer
  - Recommended 30- 45 days

- A Foster Council will be established with leaders from both churches as defined in detail in point 5 of this section below.
- A complete analysis and assessment of NHBC and its ministerial effectiveness will be conducted. This will include but not be limited to:
  - Speaking to existing members, staff and determining perceptions of greatest needs, desires, and hopes
  - Speaking to partners of NHBC through the current liaison team of NHBC
  - Discovering how NHBC is viewed in its immediate community
  - Discovering and assessing the ministerial needs within the church and community
  - Examining governing documents and policies
  - Examining NHBC's effectiveness at making disciples
  - Assessing the existing facilities and determining effective usage as it relates to ministry, mission, and outreach
  - Analyzing the finances, giving, obligations, and financial controls of NHBC
- The Council will prioritize needs and develop an action plan to address them.
- PC will prayerfully seek out called PC members and extend an invitation to join the Foster Care mission at NHBC.
- PC will seek to meet immediate needs in both children and student ministries by providing additional volunteer leaders and teachers.

### **End of Month 3 (1<sup>st</sup> Off Ramp)**

- The Foster Council will present a formal proposal/strategy of needed changes to the congregation of NHBC. This action plan will address needs pertaining to Sunday morning worship, evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, local outreach, national/international missions, children's and student ministry, and other observed needs within the church community.
- NHBC will be asked to vote on this proposal. This is the first designated "off-ramp." If NHBC votes no on the proposal, this will end the foster care covenant and relationship.

### **Months 4 – 6**

- Preaching will continue to be supplied by the Interim Pastor
- PC and NHBC will begin praying strategically for their community
- PC church volunteer team members will begin worshipping/serving at NHBC
- Outreach to the community, the Sunday morning worship time and a discipleship pathway will be the priorities for implementation
- PC will begin preparing for the implementation of church strategies by recruiting, assessing, and training necessary leadership.

### **Months 7-12**

- Implementation of the approved action plan continues.

- Comprehensive action plans for small groups, discipleship, evangelism, community engagement, and children's/student ministry strategies should be in place.
- The Foster Council will begin crafting a job description for the new Lead Pastor.
- PC and NHBC will solicit feedback from church members and meet to evaluate and give insight/feedback on the Interim Pastor.
- Needed polity changes will be identified and a season of communication, teaching and prayer will predicate any changes.
- Proposed changes to bylaws and governing documents, to incorporate changes in polity, will be finalized and brought before the congregation for vote.

### **By End of 12th Month (2<sup>nd</sup> Off Ramp)**

- The Foster Council will present a formal proposal of the identified polity changes and subsequent alterations to the governing documents to the congregation of NHBC.
- NHBC will be asked to vote on this proposal. This is the second designated "off-ramp." If NHBC votes no on the proposal, this will end the foster care covenant and relationship.

### **Month 13-18**

- The Foster Council will meet with the Interim Pastor to provide feedback and prayerfully discern if the Interim Pastor would desire to transition to the Lead Pastor of NHBC.
- If the Interim Pastor does desire the Lead Pastor role, then NHBC, in cooperation with the Foster Council (absent the Interim Pastor), will determine to either retain the Interim Pastor or seek other potential candidates.
- If retain, NHBC will be given an opportunity to vote and affirm the Interim Pastor to become the Lead pastor. If they vote yes, they agree to continue the process with the agreed upon leadership. If they vote no, Foster Council will initiate a search process for the future Lead Pastor of NHBC.
- Ministry Leadership teams transition to permanent leadership structure agreed upon in governing documents and approved action plans.
- Implementation of the approved action plan under NHBC leadership and PC coaching.
- Evaluation of fostering process to determine diagnosis of church health.
- After evaluation, if healthy culture, ministry, and mission have been established and leadership determines confidence in direction moving forward, the fostering relationship officially ends.
- Celebration Sunday
- NHBC and PC enter coaching relationship and partner with each other for ongoing gospel ministry.

### **By End of 18<sup>th</sup> Month**

- Foster Council will present a Lead Pastor Candidate to NHBC for a vote of affirmation.
  - If NHBC votes no, this foster care covenant and relationship shall end. This is the 3rd designated off-ramp. If they vote yes, they agree to continue the process with the agreed upon leadership.
5. PC will adhere to the following temporary decision-making process that will govern all decisions within the duration of the “foster-care” covenant.
    - Three leaders from each church, meeting the qualifications of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 (with the exception of gender), and the Interim Pastor from NHBC will form a Foster Council.
    - The Foster Council will have decision making responsibilities for NHBC during the Foster-Care covenant period with the exception of substantive matters of the church. Substantive matters would include the approval of an annual budget, approval of pastoral positions and hires, the purchase, sale or mortgage of real property and changes to the constitution and bylaws. These substantive matters will be brought before the congregation of NHBC for a vote. The Foster Council will also be responsible for adhering to this foster covenant and giving oversight to the NHBC Interim Pastor.
    - The following practices shall apply to the Foster Council:
      - The original identified Council will serve for the duration of the Foster-Care Covenant
      - The presence of 50% of the members of the Foster Council shall constitute a quorum.
      - In decision making, each member of the Council shall be entitled to cast one vote whether present or by proxy. The affirmative vote of a majority of the Council shall be considered the act of the Council.
      - Any member of the Foster Council may be removed at any time with or without cause by a vote of two-thirds of the Council excluding the vote of the affected Council member.
      - If a Council member is removed, the representative church shall appoint another member to the Council so as to meet the requirements above.
  6. PC will maintain an intentional and determined ministry of prayer, support and love for NHBC, which will be shown in tangible ways during this time.
  7. PC will have consistent, ongoing Foster Council meetings for coordinating efforts, building trust, addressing areas of growth and implementing strategies for positive alignment needed during this time; simultaneously, the pastoral leadership of NHBC will coordinate and share progress or concerns that need to be addressed.
  8. PC will lead the Foster Council to hold special “progress evaluations” with the recognized church leadership at NHBC each six months to evaluate our joint efforts and address any concerns that may have been raised.
  9. PC will lead the Foster Council to communicate with NHBC 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.

## **New Hope Baptist Church Commitments**

We, the leadership of NHBC agree to this, and in doing so, affirm the following:

1. NHBC will humbly grant to the Foster Care Council the aforementioned stated parameters of leadership, finances and decision-making for the duration of this covenant agreement, believing that the Foster Care Council has our church's best interests and God's glory at heart in what they determine God is leading them to do.
2. NHBC will suspend its bylaws for the period of this covenant in order to align itself with the decision-making process detailed in point 5 above. In addition, the committees and leadership structure will work cooperatively under the authority and direction of the Foster Council in order to support its leadership during this time period.
3. NHBC will agree that all congregational votes within the duration of this foster care agreement will be by active members of NHBC only since the member rolls have not been updated in some time.
  - Active Members will be defined as those who are currently members of NHBC AND have physically attended at least 50% of the Sundays in 2023. Exceptions to these criteria for homebound members and other requested exceptions will need approval by the Church Moderator and Clerk.
4. NHBC will not undermine or sabotage the efforts of PC to implement healthy, life-giving systems and processes within our church, nor will we allow any of our members to do this. (If individuals are discovered doing this, we will confront them biblically, even to the extent of church discipline, if necessary.)
5. NHBC will embrace the modeling, coaching and equipping of PC for our current church leadership roles during the time in question and allow PC to help us improve our abilities for the future, as they work beside us and then support us in resuming the roles we hold in a healthier manner.
6. NHBC will coordinate with PC on the availability of our budget, as it will be needed for the process of provision and investment during this foster care covenant.
7. NHBC agrees to be trained, encouraged and equipped by PC for the future effectiveness and ministry of NHBC.
8. NHBC will also have an ongoing relationship of prayer, support and love for PC during this time and for these efforts.

## **Joint Commitments**

Together we at PC and at NHBC agree to the following:

1. We will jointly agree to 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:
  - Community assessment
  - Priority of prayer and our spiritual condition
  - Development of a disciple-making pathway
  - Worship attendance
  - Membership requirements
  - Small group/Sunday school involvement
  - Missional community engagement

- Review and update of governing documents
  - Giving mechanisms
  - Outreach opportunities
  - Facility upgrade
2. We 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.
  3. We both agree not to end the process prematurely unless the following happens:
    - The benchmarks set at the beginning of the process have been met ahead of schedule.
    - The time of this covenant has been completed.
    - The covenant is being exited at a designated off-ramp.
    - NHBC insists that PC withdraw its assistance. If this choice is made, it must be done by a written ballot vote in which two thirds of active members of NHBC vote in the affirmative. (~~“Active members” will be defined as those who have attended at least 50% of the Sundays during the time in question, attend a small group or Sunday School class, have participated in some outreach or fellowship activity promoted by the church during this time, and are monthly contributors to NHBC.~~)

**We affirm** PC’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 NHBC. 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 NHBC 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 on behalf of the congregations of NHBC and PC.

**NHBC**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ken Lowery

\_\_\_\_\_  
Traci Wilkerson

**PC**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Savage

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Wallace Wilson

---

Mike Allen

---

Ron Harding

---

Paul Jimenez