

## **GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT**

**As amended, restated, and approved by the Council of Elders on (August 31, 2022) and herein referred to as the “Governance Document”**

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## **FIRST AMENDED AND RESTATED GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT OF FOREST HILL CHURCH**

### **ARTICLE I: Purpose Building bridges that connect Everyone to Dynamic Life in Christ**

#### **Article II: Our Beliefs Essentials of our Faith**

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith:

- We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!
- Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
- The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
- Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifying them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.

- The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity, the sacraments of baptism and communion are administered in their integrity, where scriptural discipline is practiced and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.
- Jesus Christ will come again to the earth—personally, visibly, and bodily—to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:20)
- The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to “Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.” He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10)

### **Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct**

This statement of essentials of our beliefs, faith and the practices of our faith outlined in Article XVI, (Practices of Faith and Policies), does not exhaust the extent of our beliefs. We hold The Bible to be the inspired and infallible Word of God that speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, salvation and the proper conduct of mankind. For purposes of Forest Hill Church's faith, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Council of Elders is Forest Hill's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

## **ARTICLE III: Offices**

### **Section 1: Principal Office**

The principal office of Forest Hill Church, a North Carolina nonprofit corporation and evangelical church, shall be located in the State of North Carolina or any other location designated by the Council of Elders.

### **Section 2: Registered Office**

The registered office of the church required by law to be maintained in the State of North Carolina may be, but need not be, identical with the principal office.

### **Section 3: Other Offices**

The church may have offices at such other places, either within or without the State of North Carolina, as the Council of Elders may designate or as the affairs of the church may require from time to time.

## **ARTICLE IV: Officers**

### **Section 1: Officers of the Church**

The officers of the church shall consist of the Senior Leadership Team, a Council Chair, Vice Chair, a Secretary, a Treasurer and other officers as the Council of Elders may from time to time

elect. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person, but no officer may act in more than one capacity where action of two or more officers is required.

## **Section 2: Election and Term**

The Council shall elect each of the Chair, Vice Chair, also the Secretary and Treasurer upon nomination of the Elder Development Committee. The Elder Development Committee will consult with the Senior Leadership Team and the Chair prior to nominating the above officers. Each of the Chairs and the Vice Chairs shall hold office for a two-year term or until his successor shall have been elected and qualified. Neither the Chair nor the Vice Chair may serve more than two successive full two-year terms. The Treasurer shall hold office for a one-year term or until his successor shall have been elected and qualified. The Treasurer shall serve no more than six consecutive years. A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise may be filled by the Council of Elders for the unexpired portion of the term. The individuals comprising the Senior Leadership Team shall be elected by the Council of Elders, upon the nomination of the Senior Leadership Team Development Committee, to serve until his death, resignation or removal. Election of elders, including the Senior Leadership Team, shall be by two-thirds vote of the elders present during a meeting at which a quorum exists.

## **Section 3: Compensation of Officers**

The compensation of all officers of the church, if any, shall be fixed by the Council of Elders and no officer shall serve the church in any other capacity and receive compensation therefore unless such additional compensation shall be authorized by the Council of Elders; provided, however, that in the case of the Senior Leadership Team, their compensation shall be fixed by the Council of Elders in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team Development Committee and the Finance and Risk Management Committee.

## **Section 4: Removal**

Any officer or agent elected or appointed by the Council of Elders may be removed by 75% vote of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum exists whenever in its judgment the best interests of the church will be served thereby; provided that such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed; provided further that, in the case of the removal of any of the individuals comprising the Senior Leadership Team, ten days' notice of the proposed removal shall be given to the Council and to the Senior Leadership Team individual (unless in the judgment of the Council such notice shall be contrary to the best interests of the church), the Leadership Team member shall have the right to address the Council prior to any vote in respect of his removal.

## **Section 5: Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team shall together be the principal executive officer and spiritual leader of the church and subject to the control of the Council of Elders, shall in general supervise and be responsible for all of the business and affairs of the church. The Senior Leadership Team shall report on matters of importance related to the church at each meeting of the Council of Elders and as requested by the Chair of the Council or the Council. The each shall sign, with the

Secretary or any other proper officer of the church thereunto authorized by the Council of Elders, any deeds, mortgages, bonds, contracts or other instruments which the Council of Elders has authorized to be executed, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by the Council of Elders or by this Governance Document to some other officer or agent of the church, or shall be required by law to be otherwise signed or executed; and in general he shall perform all duties incident to the office of Senior Leadership Team and such other duties as may be prescribed by the Council of Elders from time to time.

### **Section 6: Chair**

The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Council of Elders and in general oversee and coordinate the activities of the Council, including, without limitation, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, committee chairs and other elders, setting the agenda for all regular and special meetings of the Council.

### **Section 7: Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair, also serves as Secretary, shall perform such duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Chair or by the Council of Elders. In the absence of the Chair or in the event of his death, inability or refusal to act, such Vice Chair designated by the Council of Elders shall perform the duties of the Chair, and when so acting shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the Chair. It is the intent that the Vice Chair becomes the Chair at the end of the Chair's term, but the Council must still approve him or her at that time. In addition, the Vice Chair acts as the chair of the Senior Leadership Team Development Committee.

### **Section 8: Secretary**

The Secretary may delegate to staff to accomplish processes that: (a) keep the minutes of the meetings of the Members, the Council of Elders and of all committees in one or more books provided for that purpose and, in respect of Council of Elder meeting minutes, record votes cast on all resolutions (including the names and votes of individual elders dissenting in respect of any vote); (b) see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of this Governance Document or as required by law, (c) be custodian of the corporate records and of the seal of the church, if any, and see that the seal of the church is affixed to all documents the execution of which on behalf of the church under its seal is duly authorized; and (d) in general perform all duties incident to the office of secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Chair or by the Council of Elders.

### **Section 9: Treasurer**

The Treasurer, may delegate to staff to accomplish processes that: (a) have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the church; receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the church from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such moneys in the name of the church in such depositories; and (b) in general, perform all of the duties incident to the office of treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him by the Chair or by the Council of Elders, or by this Governance Document.

## **ARTICLE V: Office of Elder**

In the Old Testament, the office of Elder was established for the oversight of the Church. In the New Testament, this office is continued. Forest Hill Church distinguishes two functional roles of elders. The first, *Ruling Elder*, pertains to one who is ordained and gifted in areas such as leadership, administration, and shepherding. The second, *Teaching Elder*, not only shares similar giftings of the Ruling Elder, they also have been ordained into pastoral ministry. By practice, Forest Hill Church uses the nomenclature of *Elder* to refer specifically to the role of Ruling Elder and the term *Pastor* to refer to the role of Teaching Elder. All church elders compose an Assembly who watch over the spiritual welfare of the congregation. A select number of the elders, while part of the Assembly, serve on the Council of Elders which has responsibilities for the direct oversight and governance of the affairs of the church.

## **ARTICLE VI: Council of Elders**

### **Section 1: General Powers**

The Council of Elders shall be responsible for the oversight and governance of the church and its ministry and the articulation and application of church doctrine, faith and practices. The Senior Leadership Team shall be the principal executive officers and spiritual leaders of the church and, subject to the control of the Council of Elders and shall in general, supervise and be responsible for all of the business and affairs of the church. Thus, the Senior Leadership Team and staff initiate and operate all pastoral and business affairs of the church, with the oversight and approval of the Council. The Council's role is not to initiate new projects, ministries, or manage the staff, but among other duties, is charged with confirming, approving and guarding the vision of the church and the long-range strategic plan as proposed, developed, and articulated by the Senior Leadership Team and approving the annual budget of the church and any material variations from such budget. In addition, the Council is responsible for hiring, supervising, praying for and with, encouraging, supporting and in extreme cases, dismissing members of the Senior Leadership Team. The other primary role is to provide spiritual oversight for the church and to preserve the unity and spiritual integrity of the church by discerning and articulating the interpretation and application of church doctrine, faith and practice.

The duties of the Council of Elders shall include, without limitation:

- Protecting the church from any action from within or without, that creates conflict with the essentials and practices of faith as outlined in Articles II and XVI.
- Confirming, approving and guarding the vision of the church and the long-range strategic plan as proposed, developed, and articulated by the Senior Leadership Team.
- Approving the annual budget of the church and any variations as determined by the Finance & Risk Management committee from such budget.
- When appropriate, hiring, supervising, praying for and with, encouraging, supporting and dismissing members of the Senior Leadership Team and, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team Development Committee, evaluating and setting individual compensation;
- Adopting standards for the ordination of pastors, pastoral counselors, elders and deacons, including determining whether ordination standards from other churches and denominations shall be sufficient; and



- Discerning and articulating the interpretation and application of church doctrine, faith and practice.

## **Section 2: Number and Qualifications**

The number of persons constituting the Council of Elders shall be twelve elected elders and the Senior Leadership Team, who shall be ex officio members of the Council of Elders, with all three representing one vote for so long as they shall serve as the Senior Leadership Team, totaling thirteen voting members.

## **Section 3: Terms of Elders**

The composition of the Council of Elders is the responsibility of the Elder Development Committee, in consultation with the Council Chair and Senior Leadership Team, and with the assistance of the designated staff liaison. The intent of Elder rotation is to create stability, flexibility and simplicity, for maintaining a Council of Elders, which has an appropriate balance between elders with different perspectives and giftedness while maintaining the institutional memory of the church.

Another objective is to manage the composition of the body, in a manner, which minimizes disproportionate turnover in any one year. Accordingly, the following general guidelines are established:

- Council members are elected for two-year terms and may be re-elected for two (2) additional consecutive terms. However, at the discretion of the Elder Development Committee in consultation with the Council Chair and Senior Leadership Team, members may be offered the opportunity to serve additional terms beyond the initial six years, if deemed appropriate to meet the “balance” objective stated above.
- In the event a council member does not complete a term, a replacement may be appointed by the Council of Elders and will be appointed to serve until the next election date.

It is God, through the Holy Spirit, who calls persons to offices in the Church. This call is confirmed in three ways; first the inward call to the individual where that person bears testimony that God has called him or her; second, a confirming call of the Elder Development Committee (EDC) and Council, and thirdly, the congregation through the membership voting process.

Each year or as deemed necessary by Council, the EDC manages the nomination process for church members to become elders. Elder candidates can be nominated by the Senior Leadership Team, campus pastors in conjunction with their lead campus Elder(s), the current Chair of Council, and by Council Elders. Candidates will ultimately be presented to serve on Council or on the Assembly for the next calendar year, as determined by the EDC and approved by Council. Existing Assembly Elders in good standing may also be nominated to serve on Council. Since twelve elders are seated on Council, the number of new elders sought will be determined by how many vacancies will occur on the Council at the end of the current term calendar year. Candidates must be interviewed and approved by the Elder Development

Committee and receive final approval to be put forth to church members as candidates, by a vote of the Council. The slate of candidates can be presented to the members by electronic means, such as electronic mail.

Each elected elder shall meet the qualifications of elders as outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-11, Titus 1:5-9, James 5:14, and I Peter 5:1-4 as determined by the Council of Elders or a committee designated for such purpose by the Council of Elders. An Elder must be a current member of the church, having shown a history of active participation in the church, at a time period long enough, preferably at least 3 years, to demonstrate sincere leadership and commitment to, and understanding of Forest Hill Church in the judgment of the EDC and the Council. Pastors and other church employees with the exception of the Senior Leadership Team, shall not be eligible to serve as elders. Pastors and elders must agree with the essentials and practices of the faith as outlined in Articles II and XVI and in the vows they take when ordained. Pastors or elders need not be residents of the State of North Carolina.

#### **Section 4: Election of Elders**

Elders shall be nominated in accordance with Article VI, Section 10(b) herein and elected annually. Election by a majority of voting Church Members is required for (i) all Elders nominated for the first time whether for Assembly or Council or (ii) any Assembly Elder(s) not currently serving on the Council of Elders. Church members will vote on the slate of elders, not individual elders.

#### **Section 5: Removal**

Any elder may be removed at any time with or without cause by the vote of 75% of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum exists.

#### **Section 6: Compensation**

Elders shall not be compensated for their services as such but may be reimbursed for any or all expenses incurred in attending regular and special meetings of the Council, provided that the Council shall approve such reimbursements.

### **ARTICLE VII: Meetings of the Council**

#### **Section 1: Regular Meetings**

The Council of Elders shall meet at least eight times annually at the principal office of the church or at such other place as the Council may designate, in accordance with a meeting schedule approved annually. In addition, the Council of Elders may provide, by resolution, the time and place, either within or without the State of North Carolina, for the holding of additional regular meetings. Regular meetings of the Council of Elders held according to the previously approved schedule may be held without notice.

#### **Section 2: Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the Council of Elders may be called by or at the request of the chairman, the Executive Leadership Team, or two thirds of the elders then in office. Such a meeting may be held either within or without the State of North Carolina, as fixed by the person or persons calling the meeting. The person or persons calling a special meeting of the Council of Elders shall, at least twenty-four hours prior to the meeting, give written notice thereof delivered personally or sent by mail, facsimile transmission or electronic mail to each elder at his address as shown by the records of the church. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail in a sealed envelope so addressed with postage thereon prepaid. If sent by electronic means, such notice shall be deemed delivered upon receipt and acknowledgement by the recipient. An elder may choose not to receive notice by electronic means at any time on a prospective basis effective upon written notice to the church or upon such later date as may be specified in the notice. Notice of meetings need not specify the purpose for which the meeting is called.

### **Section 3: Closed Session**

The Council shall have the right and power at any meeting or any portion of any meeting to excuse any elder, church staff or members of the Senior Leadership Team, from participation in such meeting or portion of such meeting if the Council determines that it is in the best interests of the church for such person to be excused, in the case of an elder, in accordance with the church's Conflict of Interest Policy or, in the case of other persons, in the discretion of the Council. The Council shall specify the reasons why such person shall be excused and provide them with an opportunity to address the Council before such person is excused from the meeting.

#### **Section 3 A: Closed Session for Church staff**

If someone from the church staff is in violation of a policy or acts in a manner that is unbecoming to the standards set forth in the employee handbook, he/she will participate in an investigation conducted by the Human Resources Manager and applicable leaders at Forest Hill church.

If the church staff is also a part of the Senior Leadership Team or one of the Campus Pastors, once the formal investigation process is complete, it will then move to the Council of Elders to review the facts and to offer up a final recommendation.

The Council of Elders shall have the right and power during a meeting to excuse the Senior Leadership team and/or Campus Pastor from participation in such meeting if the Council of Elders unanimously determines that it is in the best interest of the church for such person or persons to be excused. The Council of Elders will be responsible for specifying the reason such person or persons is excused and give him/her the opportunity to address the Council prior and/or after the deliberation to offer their perspective before a final decision is made.

#### **Section 3 B: Closed Session for Elder, Deacon or member of Forest Hill church**

If an elder, deacon or member of the Forest Hill church decides to violate the Essentials of Faith, the Council of Elders shall have the right and power at any full or portion of a meeting to excuse either/or the violator and member of the Senior Leadership team so the situation can be reviewed in full. Such officers of the church will be provided the opportunity to address the Council prior and/or after the deliberation to offer their perspective before a final decision is made.

#### **Section 4: Waiver of Notice**

Any elder may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance by an elder at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where an elder attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.

#### **Section 5: Quorum**

A majority of the elders and at least one member of the Senior Leadership Team shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Council of Elders.

#### **Section 6: Manner of Acting**

Except as otherwise provided in this Governance Document, the act of two-thirds of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Council of Elders. Notwithstanding the forgoing, the Council recognizes the Bible's clear teaching on the power of love and unity in the Bible, especially among those called to be God's leaders in the church. Whenever God's leaders are operating in mutual love and unity, God's Spirit powerfully guides God's people and church in new directions and visions. Therefore, members of the Council will seek unified agreement among themselves and with the senior staff of the church on all Council decisions. If there is ever disunity in respect of a Council decision, the Council and staff may enter into a season of prayer and fasting to find God's will for the church. The Council may seek the input of the appropriate church staff in its deliberations. Above all, we will love one another, a love clearly described in I Corinthians 13:4-8.

#### **Section 7: Presumption of Assent**

An elder of the church who is present at a meeting of the Council of Elders at which action on any matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action taken unless his contrary vote is recorded or his dissent is otherwise entered in the minutes of the meeting or unless he shall file his written dissent to such action with the person acting as the secretary of the meeting before the adjournment thereof or shall forward such dissent by registered mail to the Secretary of the church reasonably after the adjournment of the meeting. Such right to dissent shall not apply to an elder who voted in favor of such action.

#### **Section 8: Informal Action by Elders**

Action taken by the elders without a meeting is nevertheless Council action if written consent to the action in question is approved by two-thirds of the elders, such approval may be evidenced by signature or electronic indicia of assent and filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the Council, whether done before or after the action so taken.

#### **Section 9: Recording of Votes**

Motions coming from the Chair of Council and committees should be written on the appropriate form and sent to the secretary in advance of the council meeting it is to be presented. All other approved motions should be written on the appropriate form by the secretary and kept with the minutes of that meeting.

The name of any elder dissenting to a motion of the Council shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting during which the vote on such resolution was taken.

## **Section 10: Standing Committees of the Council**

The standing committees of the Council of Elders shall include the Senior Leadership Team Development Committee, Elder Development Committee, Finance and Risk Management Committee, Audit Committee and Governance Committee. The Council of Elders at any time may dissolve, reconstitute or otherwise modify any standing committee named herein and/or designate additional standing committees. Each standing committee shall be chaired by a Council Elder nominated by the Chair of the Council, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, provided that the Chair of the Council shall not serve as the chair of any standing committee. The Chair of the Council and the committee Chair shall nominate elders (and may nominate church Members) to serve on each standing committee for a minimum of a one-year term. The Council should annually at its January meeting approve the Chair's nominations for standing committee chairs and members. The Senior Leadership Team or, subject to the approval of the Council, his delegate(s) may be a nonvoting member of each standing committee. The Finance & Risk Management and the Elder Development Committees must have a charter approved by Council and reviewed as requested by Council. Each committee shall deliver a report of its activities to the Council of Elders annually or with such frequency as requested by the Council.

- Senior Leadership Team Development Committee. The Senior Leadership Team Development Committee shall be responsible for hiring, praying for and with, supporting, encouraging, evaluating and in consultation with the Finance and Risk Management Committee, compensating, and, if appropriate, recommend dismissal of individuals comprising the Senior Leadership Team. The committee shall meet regularly, at least two times per year, and as requested by the Senior Leadership Team or the chair of the committee. In addition, the Vice Chair of Council acts as the chair of this committee.
- Elder Development Committee. The Elder Development Committee shall be responsible for overseeing the annual process to nominate church Members to serve as elders. It is expected that nominations for the office of elder shall be presented as a slate to the Church Members for vote. The committee shall actively seek the input of the Senior Leadership Team, Campus pastors, Council Elders and if appropriate and helpful, other Church Members in preparing such slate, which then shall be approved by the Council of Elders before its submission to the Members for approval. The committee also shall be responsible for nominating the officers of the Council, and, as appropriate, recommend the discipline and/or dismissal of elders to the Council of Elders. The committee shall meet as necessary.
- Finance and Risk Management Committee. The Finance and Risk Management Committee shall recommend to the Council the annual budget of the church, cash management and investment strategies, long range financial objectives for the church, capital expenditures, incurrence of debt, and shall develop and implement risk

management strategies (including, without limitation, legal compliance, internal controls and insurance). The committee shall meet at least six times per year.

•Audit Committee. The Audit Committee shall be responsible for recommending the selection of external auditors to the Council; receiving, reviewing, and forwarding to the Council the annual financial report of the external auditors; and such other matters as directed by the Council. The Chair of the Audit Committee shall serve as the Compliance Officer of the church with such duties as set forth in the Ethics Policy and as designated by the Council of Elders. The committee shall meet at least twice annually.

•Governance Committee. The Governance Committee shall be responsible for ensuring that the governance practices and documents of the church including this Governance Document protect the church by guarding the purpose, essentials of faith, practices of faith, the congregation, staff, elected officers (elders and deacons) and church assets from any internal or external movement, activity, organization, federal law, state law or local ordinances, which are in conflict with the church's stated essentials and practices of our faith. The committee chair shall consult with Council and the Executive Leadership Team or their designee when matters arise that need to be researched and acted upon. The committee shall make a report annually to the Assembly of any significant changes to the Governance Document. The committee members shall serve one-year terms and can serve subsequent terms by motion. The committee shall present to Council for approval any proposed changes to the Governance Document as outlined in Article XII Section 4. The Governance Committee shall meet at least four times annually. The committee shall make a report or presentation to the Assembly of any significant governance changes. Each year, the chair of the committee or his/her designee should give an orientation to all newly elected elders of the Assembly on church governance and organization.

### **Section 11: Ad Hoc Committees of the Council**

The Council of Elders, by resolution adopted by a majority of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present, may authorize the formation of ad hoc committees. Such authorizing resolutions shall define generally the authority, mandate and duration of such committees. The Chair of the Council shall designate Members to serve as members of each such committee and, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, shall designate a Council Elder to serve as the chair of each such committee. Any such committee to the extent authorized by law and provided in such resolution, that is comprised only of elders shall have and may exercise all of the authority of the Council of Elders in the management of the church. The designation of any committee and the delegation thereto of authority shall not operate to relieve the Council of Elders, or any member thereof, of any responsibility or liability imposed upon it or him by law. Each committee shall deliver a report of its activities to the Council of Elders annually or with such frequency as requested by the Council.

### **ARTICLE VIII: Assembly of Elders**

The Assembly serves as a body of spiritual leaders of the congregation which is comprised of all elected elders and is under the guidance of the Council of Elders and shall create its own charter defining how it operates and how often it meets. All active Elders who remain Members of the church shall be invited and encouraged to meet from time-to-time as an Assembly of Elders for the purpose of praying together, to receive updates on church matters and to coordinate

Assembly initiatives. The Assembly shall be responsible for teaching new member classes or otherwise facilitate new member orientation, and for conducting new member interviews as stated in Article IV, Section 1. The Assembly chair may call upon the Diaconate to assist with new member interviews. The Assembly shall also serve by praying for and anointing the congregation, serving communion in worship services, other gatherings and to those who are sick or homebound, conducting baptism interviews and ensuring the spiritual discipline of individuals in the church in support of the Senior Leadership Team, Council, and Campus Pastors. The Assembly Chair and Assembly Vice Chair are 1) nominated by the Elder Development Committee and approved by Council. The chair of the Assembly of Elders shall have the right to observe all meetings of the Council of Elders and shall serve as a liaison between the Council and the Assembly of Elders and shall coordinate closely with the chair of the Elder Development Committee and Campus Pastors to determine elder shortages. The Assembly of Elders shall have no authority to manage the affairs of the church.

## **ARTICLE IX: PASTORAL MINISTRY**

### **Section 1: Theological Background**

As Christians, we understand the Church is a community called into being by Jesus Christ. It is Christ who gives the Church its faith and life, its unity and mission, its officers and ordinance; and Christ is its head in all things.

We believe in the priesthood of all believers – that is, that all church members regardless of their occupational choice are engaged in ministry. That is their Christian vocation. The Holy Spirit may call some among them to pastoral ministry. Thus pastoral ministry is one among many occupations through which men and women express their God-given interests and abilities in life and daily work. Response to this calling, as to every other, is approached through a careful process of exploration and testing carried on within the community of faith, during which gifts and motivations are evaluated in light of the needs of the Church and the world.

The essential role of the pastor is set forth in the Bible. Among the key concepts, which have been proved valid by the Church's experience through the years, are the following:

- Ordained ministry is a gift of God to the Church;
- Ordained ministers equip church members for their ministry by proclaiming the Gospel, teaching faith, caring for people, administering the sacraments, officiating weddings and funerals and, along with elders, ensuring that the life of the congregation is governed in an orderly way;
- The Church actively seeks and ordains persons whose gifts and abilities equip them for pastoral ministry. If God calls a person ordained to this ministry to other work at a later time, the Church can release them from ordained office.
- One experiences God's call to ministry privately as an inner urgency. The Church, however, experiences that call publicly as it affirms that individual's gifts for ministry and confirms God's call through the acts of ordination and installation.

The relationship between the Church and those who feel called to be pastors carries important responsibilities for all involved. The process is intended primarily to meet the ministry needs of Forest Hill Church.

For congregations, it means educating all members in the biblical understanding of Christian vocation and helping believers understand that the call of discipleship includes making responsible occupational choices. It also means nurturing and encouraging persons seeking to discern their call to the ministry.

For candidates who enter into the process, it involves a sense of solemn obligation to God and to the Church.

For theological institutions, it means upholding the highest standards of an educated ministry for providing scriptural, historical, doctrinal and ecclesiastical disciplines, as well as opportunities for students to develop personal and professional skills.

For all participants involved in the process of preparation for ministry, it means relating to one another in continuing openness to God's grace, with mutual trust and respect based upon the assurance that God has given everyone gifts to use in the Church's ministry.

## **Section 2: Preparation for Pastoral Ministry**

Forest Hill Church has in-depth pastoral ministry ordination requirements which candidates must meet prior to ordination. The process is overseen by the Senior Leadership Team-under the authority of the Council of Elders. Candidates for ordination into pastoral ministry will ordinarily be part of Forest Hill Church staff. Once candidates successfully complete all the pastoral ordination requirements, they will be reviewed and affirmed by the Council prior to ordination. In addition to the above, the successful candidate will have met the following requirements prior to ordination into pastoral ministry:

- Subscribe to the Forest Hill Church Essentials of Faith (See Article II)
- Graduate Theological Degree
- Three years of practical ministry experience
- Abide by the Ministerial Ethics of Forest Hill Church
- Adherence to the Forest Hill Governance and Practices of Ministry and the Promotion of Peace, Purity and Unity in the church
- Membership at Forest Hill Church
- Pass psychological testing and ordination exams administered by external consultants and Forest Hill Church staff, as relevant and applicable
- Ordinarily a Forest Hill Church staff member

Forest Hill Church pastors, once ordained, have the responsibility to renew their ordination annually.

## **ARTICLE X: Diaconate**



Deacons shall be charged with providing support, comfort and care to Members with particular needs (e.g., making hospital visits, praying with congregants, serving communion and more.) Deacons must be members of the church and must agree with the essentials and practices of the faith as outlined in Articles II and XVI and in the vows they take when ordained. The number of deacons constituting the Diaconate shall be determined from year-to-year in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team or his designee. Each deacon shall be elected for a three-year term and until his successor is elected and qualifies. The Diaconate shall be divided into three classes of deacons with staggered terms. The deacons shall be elected by the Members in accordance with the procedures set forth in Article V Section II. hereof. Any deacon may be removed at any time with or without cause by the vote of the Council of Elders. The chair of the Diaconate shall be under the guidance of a designated staff pastor and shall have the right to observe all meetings of the Council of Elders (other than closed sessions) and shall serve as a liaison between the Council and the Diaconate. The Diaconate may be called upon by the Assembly chair to assist with new member interviews as stated in Article IV, Section 1. The Diaconate shall have no authority to manage the affairs of the church.

## **ARTICLE XI: Vows**

### **Section 1: Deacon/Elder/Pastor Vows**

Upon ordination, the deacon/elder/pastor will affirm the following vows:

- Do you reaffirm your faith in Jesus Christ as your own personal Lord and Savior?
- Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, totally trustworthy, fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, the supreme, final and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
- Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Essentials and Practices of the Faith as outlined in the Forest Hill Church governance?
- Do you promise that if at any time you find yourself out of accord with any of the Essentials or Practices of the Faith you will on your own initiative make known to your Church Council the change which has taken place in your views since the assumption of this ordination vow?
- Do you subscribe to the government and discipline of Forest Hill Church?
- Do you promise subjection to your fellow deacons, elders and pastors?
- Have you been induced as far as you know your own heart, to accept the office of Deacon/Elder/Pastor from love and God and sincere desire to promote His glory in the Gospel of His Son?
- Do you promise to be zealous and faithful in promoting the truths of the Gospel and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise to you on that account?
- Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as Deacon/Elder/Pastor, whether personal or relative, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the Gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before this congregation of which God will make you an officer?
- Are you now willing to take responsibility in the life of this congregation as a Deacon/Elder/Pastor, and will you seek to discharge your duties, relying on the Grace of God, in such a way that the entire Church of Jesus Christ will be blessed?

## **ARTICLE XII: Members**

### **Section 1: Members**

The members of the corporation (referred to herein individually, as a “Member” and collectively, as the “Church Members.”), shall be those active church congregants, who were interviewed by an elder, pastor or deacon of the church, have attended a membership class or have completed other curriculum taught by the Assembly of Elders, and have signed the membership covenant, which proclaims their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, has been baptized by any Christian church or who has made plans to be baptized by Forest Hill Church and acknowledges the church's beliefs (essentials and practices of faith) as stated in Articles II and XVI.

## **Section 2: Member Rights**

The Members shall have only those voting and other rights expressly set forth in this Governance Document or required by law.

## **Section 3: Meetings of the Members**

- Meetings:** Special meetings of the Members may be called by motion of the council of elders. Such a meeting may be held either within or without the State of North Carolina, as fixed by the persons calling the meeting.
- Notice of Meetings:** The Members shall receive notice of any meeting either (i) by announcement made in connection with worship services for two consecutive weekends prior to the meeting, the last announcement being at least one day prior to the meeting or (ii) in writing delivered personally or sent by United States mail or (iii) electronic means to each Member at his address as shown by the records of the Church. A Member may choose not to receive notice by electronic means at any time on a prospective basis effective upon written notice to the Church or upon such later date as may be specified in the notice. Notice of meetings need not specify the purpose for which the meeting is called. Notwithstanding the forgoing, the Council of Elders may designate in advance of any meeting of the Members any other notice period or delivery method that shall be fair and reasonable under the circumstances, and such notice period and delivery method shall be deemed valid pursuant to this Governance Document.
- Waiver of Notice:** Any Member may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance by a Member at a meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a Member attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened.
- Quorum:** Fifteen-percent of the Members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Members.
- Manner of Acting:** Except as otherwise provided in this Governance Document, the act of the majority of the Members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Members.
- Presumption of Assent:** A Member who is present at a meeting of the Members at which action on any matter is taken shall be presumed to have assented to the action taken unless his contrary vote is recorded or his dissent is otherwise entered in the minutes of the meeting or unless he shall file his written dissent to such action with the person acting as the secretary of the meeting before the adjournment thereof or shall forward such dissent by registered mail to the Secretary of the church in a reasonable amount of time after the adjournment of the meeting. Such right to dissent shall not apply to a Member who voted in favor of such action.

•**Vote by Ballot:** Any action that may be taken at a meeting of the Members may be taken without a meeting if the church delivers a written ballot to each Member, which ballot may be delivered by United States mail or electronic means, shall set forth each proposed action and provide an opportunity to vote for or against each such proposed action. Approval by written ballot pursuant to this section shall be valid only when the number of votes cast by ballot delivered by United States mail or electronic means equals or exceeds the quorum required to be present at a meeting authorizing the action, and the number of approvals equals or exceeds the number of votes that would be required to approve the matter at a meeting at which the same total number of votes were cast. All solicitations for votes by written ballot shall indicate the time by which a ballot shall be received by the church in order to be counted. Submission of a written ballot submitted by a Member to the Church may be satisfied by electronic transmission, including electronic mail, provided that such electronic transmission shall either set forth or be submitted with information from which it can be determined that the electronic transmission was authorized by the Member.

•**Termination of Membership:** The Council of Elders has the authority to terminate membership upon the recommendation of the member's Campus Pastor, Senior Leadership Team, or Assembly of Elders, striving to follow the example of Matthew 18:15-17.

## **ARTICLE XIII: Contracts, Loans, Checks, Deposits and Gifts**

### **Section 1: Contracts**

The Council of Elders may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the church, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

### **Section 2: Loans**

No loans shall be contracted on behalf of the church and no evidences of indebtedness shall be issued in its name unless authorized by a resolution of the Council of Elders. Such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

### **Section 3: Checks and Drafts**

All checks, drafts or other orders for the payment of money, issued in the name of the church, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents, of the church and in such manner as shall from time-to-time be determined by resolution of the Council of Elders. In the absence of such resolution, the Treasurer shall sign such instruments.

### **Section 4: Deposits**

All funds of the church not otherwise employed shall be deposited from time-to-time to the credit of the church in such depositories as the Council of Elders may select.

### **Section 5: Gifts**

The Council of Elders may accept or decline, on behalf of the church, any contribution, gift, bequest or devise for the general purpose or for any special purposes of the church.

### **Section 6: Insurance**

The Council of Elders shall procure appropriate levels of insurance for the church, including, without limitation, general liability and directors and officers coverage as provided in Article XII, Section 2.

## **ARTICLE XIV: General Provisions**

### **Section 1: Seal**

The corporate seal of the church shall consist of two concentric circles between which is the name of the church and in the center of which is inscribed SEAL; and such seal, is hereby adopted as the corporate seal of the church.

### **Section 2: Indemnification**

Any person who at any time serves or has served as an elder, officer, employee or agent of the church, or in such capacity at the request of the church for any other church, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, shall have a right to be indemnified by the church to the fullest extent permitted by law against (a) reasonable expenses, including attorneys' fees, actually and necessarily incurred by him in connection with any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceedings, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative, and whether or not brought by or on behalf of the church, seeking to hold him liable by reason of the fact that he is or was acting in such capacity, and (b) reasonable payments made by him in satisfaction of any judgment, money decree, fine, penalty or settlement for which he may have become liable in any such action, suit or proceeding. The Council reserves the right, upon a vote of the Council, to refuse to indemnify an individual covered by this section if there is a question as to whether an individual elder took action that violated church policy on faith and ethics.

The Council of Elders of the church shall take all such action as may be necessary and appropriate to authorize the church to pay the indemnification required by this section, including without limitation, to the extent needed, making a good faith evaluation of the manner in which the claimant for indemnity acted and of the reasonable amount of indemnity due him.

Expenses incurred in defending a civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding shall be paid by the church in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding, as authorized by the Council of Elders in the specific case, upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the elder, officer, employee or agent to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined that he is not entitled to be indemnified by the Church as authorized in this section.

Any person who at any time after the adoption of this section serves or has served in any of the aforesaid capacities for or on behalf of the church shall be deemed to be doing or to have done so in reliance upon, and as consideration for, the right of indemnification provided herein. Such

right shall inure to the benefit of the legal representatives of any such person and shall not be exclusive of any other rights to which such person may be entitled apart from the provision of this section.

In addition to the foregoing, the Council of Elders shall have the right and power to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any person who is or was an elder, officer, employee or agent of the church, or is or was serving at the request of the church as elder, officer, employee or agent of another church, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity, or arising out of his status as such, whether or not the church would have the power to indemnify him against such liability.

### **Section 3: Fiscal Year**

The fiscal year of the church shall end September 30.

### **Section 4: Amendments**

Except as otherwise provided herein, this Governance Document or the church's articles of incorporation may be amended or repealed and a new governance document (or amended articles of incorporation) may be adopted by the affirmative vote of 75% of the elders then holding office at any regular or special meeting of the Council of Elders at which a quorum is present, provided that at least ten days' written notice is given of intention to alter, amend, repeal or adopt a new governance document (or articles of incorporation) at such meeting.

### **Section 5: Biannual Review**

The Governance Committee shall review the articles of incorporation, this Governance Document, and related policies and procedures to determine and recommend whether any amendments are in the best interests of the church. (Refer to Section 4 above for the adoption process.)

### **Section 6: Books and Records**

The church shall keep correct and complete books and records and shall also keep minutes of the proceedings of the Members, the Council of Elders and committees having any of the authority of the Council of Elders. The books, records and papers of the church shall at all times, during reasonable business hours, be subject to inspection by any elder. The articles of incorporation and this Governance Document shall be available for inspection by any elder at the principal office of the church.

### **Section 7: Construction of Terms**

Where appropriate, any word denoting or referring to one gender shall be deemed to include the other gender.

## **ARTICLE XV: Alignment, Simplicity, Clarity, and Accountability**

“Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. “Hebrews 4:13

All employees and lay leaders of the church, including members of the Council of Elders, shall at all times “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. “Acts 20:28

The church leadership takes the matters of alignment, simplicity, clarity and accountability very seriously. Ultimately, we are all fully known by and accountable to God; however, we also are committed to a governance structure under which information related to the operations and finances of the church will be regularly communicated to the Council of Elders and, as appropriate, to other committees and the congregation and under which pastors, other employees and lay leaders have distinct but complementary roles in the administration of the church.

The integrity of the governance structure is supported by:

- The Council of Elders, the ultimate fiduciary governing body of the Church, who have been elected by the congregation.
- Pastors, church staff, and family members of pastors and executive staff may not serve as voting members of the Council of Elders due to potential conflicts of interest. However the Senior Leadership Team is an ex-officio voting member of the Council of Elders.
- A vote by Church Members to affirm Senior Leadership Team after election by the Council of Elders.
- Annual financial audits are conducted by an independent, qualified auditing firm selected by the Council of Elders.
- The Council of Elders, in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team, assures that our theology and doctrine remain true to the Holy Scripture and any change is consistent with the integrity of the Essentials and Practices of Our Faith. See Articles II and XVI.

## **ARTICLE XVI: Whistleblower Policy**

**This Article refers to elders and officers of the church. Employees should refer to their Human Resources Handbook or contact that department to report any violations or suspected violations of ethics or church policies.**

### **Section 1: General**

The elders and officers of the church are expected to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. As representatives of the church, we must practice honesty and integrity in fulfilling our responsibilities and comply with all applicable laws and regulations.

### **Section 2: Reporting Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all elders and officers to report violations or suspected violations of the church’s governance documents, policies and procedures, and state and federal law in accordance with this policy.

### **Section 3: No Retaliation**

No elder or officer, who in good faith reports any such violation shall suffer harassment, retaliation or adverse consequence. An elder or officer, who retaliates against someone that has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline by the Council of Elders. This policy is intended to encourage and enable lay leaders and officers to raise serious concerns within the church prior to seeking resolution outside the church.

#### **Section 4: Reporting Violations**

The church has an open-door policy. Elders and officers are encouraged to share their questions, concerns, suspected fraud, suggestions or complaints with the church's Compliance Officer (The Audit Committee Chair), who has specific responsibility to investigate all reported violations.

#### **Section 5: Compliance Officer**

The church's Compliance Officer (the Audit committee chair) is responsible for investigating and resolving all reported complaints and allegations concerning violations of the church's policies and, at his discretion, should advise the Chair of the Council of Elders and the Senior Leadership Team. The Compliance Officer is a member of the Council of Elders and is required to report to the Council of Elders at least annually on compliance activity. The Compliance Officer shall be the chair of the Audit Committee.

#### **Section 6: Accounting and Auditing Matters**

The Council of Elders shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls or auditing. The Compliance Officer shall immediately notify the other Audit Committee members and/or the Council, as appropriate, of any such complaint and work with the appropriate body or bodies until the matter is resolved.

#### **Section 7: Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the church's governance documents, policies and procedures, and state and federal law. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

#### **Section 8: Confidentiality**

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

#### **Section 9: Handling of Reported Violations**

The Compliance Officer will notify the sender and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports will be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action will be taken if warranted by the investigation.

## **ARTICLE XVII: Conflict of Interest Policy**

### **Section 1: Purpose**

The purpose of the conflict-of-interest policy is to protect the interests of the church when it is contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of an officer or elder of the church or might result in a possible excess benefit transaction. This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflict of interest applicable to nonprofit, charitable and religious organizations.

### **Section 2: Definitions**

- Interested Person**. Any elder, pastor or officer who has a direct or indirect financial interest, as defined below, is an interested person.
- Financial Interest**. A person has a financial interest if the person has, directly or indirectly, through business, investment, or family:
  - An ownership or investment interest in any entity with which the church has a transaction or arrangement,
  - A compensation arrangement with the church or with any entity or individual with which the church has a transaction or arrangement, or
  - A potential ownership or investment interest in, or compensation arrangement with, any entity or individual with which the church is negotiating a transaction or arrangement.

Compensation includes direct and indirect remuneration as well as gifts or favors that are not insubstantial.

A financial interest is not necessarily a conflict of interest. Under Section 3.2, a person who has a financial interest may have a conflict of interest only if the Council of Elders decides that a conflict of interest exists.

### **Section 3: Procedures**

- Duty to Disclose**. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest, an interested person must disclose in advance the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all material facts to the Council of Elders and members of committees with governing board delegated powers considering the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- Determining Whether a Conflict-of-Interest Exists**. After disclosure of the financial interest and all material facts, and after any discussion with the interested person, he/she shall leave the governing board or committee meeting while the determination of a conflict of interest is discussed and voted upon. The remaining board or committee members shall decide if a conflict of interest exists.
- Procedures for Addressing the Conflict of Interest**.
  - An interested person may make a presentation at the governing board or committee meeting, but after the presentation, he/she shall leave the meeting during the discussion of, and the vote on, the transaction or arrangement involving the possible conflict of interest.



- The chairperson of the governing board or committee shall, if appropriate, appoint a disinterested person or committee to investigate alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement.
- After exercising due diligence, the governing board or committee shall determine whether the church can obtain with reasonable efforts a more advantageous transaction or arrangement from a person or entity that would not give rise to a conflict of interest.
- If a more advantageous transaction or arrangement is not reasonably possible under circumstances not producing a conflict of interest, the governing board or committee shall determine by a majority vote of the disinterested elders whether the transaction or arrangement is in the church's best interest, for its own benefit, and whether it is fair and reasonable. In conformity with the above determination it shall make its decision as to whether to enter into the transaction or arrangement.

#### 4. Violations of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy

- If the governing board or committee has reasonable cause to believe an interested party has failed to disclose actual or possible conflicts of interest, it shall inform the interested party of the basis for such belief and afford the interested party an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.
- If, after hearing the interested party's response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the governing board or committee determines the interested party has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action.

#### **Section 4: Records of Proceedings**

The minutes of the governing board and all committees with board delegated powers shall contain:

- The names of the persons who disclosed or otherwise were found to have a financial interest in connection with an actual or possible conflict of interest, the nature of the financial interest, any action taken to determine whether a conflict of interest was present, and the governing board's or committee's decision as to whether a conflict of interest in fact existed.
- The names of the persons who were present for discussions and votes relating to the transaction or arrangement, the content of the discussion, including any alternatives to the proposed transaction or arrangement, and a record of any votes taken in connection with the proceedings.

#### **Section 5: Compensation**

- A voting member of the governing board who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- A voting member of any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church for services is precluded from voting on matters pertaining to that member's compensation.
- No voting member of the governing board or any committee whose jurisdiction includes compensation matters and who receives compensation, directly or indirectly, from the church, either individually or collectively, is prohibited from providing information to any committee regarding compensation.

#### **Section 6: Annual Statements**

Each elder, pastor and officer shall annually sign a statement (a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A), which affirms such person:

- Has received a copy of the conflict-of-interest policy
- Has read and understands the policy
- Has agreed to comply with the policy
- Understands the church is a religious organization and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities, which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

**Section 7: Periodic Reviews**

To ensure the church operates in a manner consistent with charitable purposes and does not engage in activities that could jeopardize its tax-exempt status, periodic reviews shall be conducted. The periodic reviews shall, at a minimum, include the following subjects:

- Whether compensation arrangements and benefits are reasonable, based on competent survey information, and the result of arm's length bargaining.
- Whether partnerships, joint ventures, and arrangements with management organizations conform to the church's written policies, are properly recorded, reflect reasonable investment or payments for goods and services, further charitable purposes and do not result in inurement, impermissible private benefit or in an excess benefit transaction.

**Section 8: Use of Outside Experts**

When conducting the periodic reviews as provided for in Section 7, the church may, but need not, use outside advisors. If outside experts are used, their use shall not relieve the governing board of its responsibility for ensuring that any transaction or arrangement is fair to the church and that periodic reviews are conducted.

**Exhibit A**

Forest Hill Church Conflict of Interest Disclosure Statement

I hereby affirm the following:

- I have received a copy of the conflict-of-interest policy.
- I have read and understand the policy.
- I have agreed to comply with the policy.
- I understand Forest Hill Church is a religious organization and in order to maintain its federal tax exemption it must engage primarily in activities, which accomplish one or more of its tax-exempt purposes.

Signature

Name (please print)

Title

Date

Approved by the Council of Elders on March 17, 2014

## **ARTICLE XVIII: Practice of Faith, other Policies, & Biblical Issue Statements**

### **Section 1: On the Sacraments of Baptism and Communion**

A sacrament, given by God and instituted by Christ, is an external sign in which the Lord God sustains faith by sealing and confirming the promises of God in the hearts and minds of those who believe in Christ. The sacrament is a visible representation, partaken of through the physical senses, by which the Holy Spirit more fully declares, seals, and applies the New Covenant promises to believers. The sacrament is also an open and visible declaration of faith in and worship of the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of the One True God, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world, and the second Person of the Trinity.

In observing the two sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper – the elements both carry a symbolic significance and convey a spiritual blessing and presence of Christ to those who observe the sacrament in faith and a worthy manner. The power of the sacrament is neither in the elements nor in the one administering them, but is in the work of Jesus Christ, conveyed by the Holy Spirit, according to the promises of God the Father, as declared in His Word. For these reasons, the observance of the sacraments should not be neglected or omitted in the life of the Church.

### **Baptism**

#### *The Significance of Baptism*

The sacrament of baptism is both an outward symbol of an inward change in a believer in Christ and a seal of the righteousness imputed to the believer through faith in Christ. To that end, the act of baptism is a public testimony of one's personal faith in Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior. Therefore, it is important that baptism take place in the presence of the Body of Christ – the Church – along with one's family and friends. Baptism is understood as a sacrament that applies to those who profess their faith in Jesus Christ and make a public commitment to follow Him (cf. Rom 6:1-7; 1 Cor 12:12-13; Acts 2:37-41; 8:32-36, 38-40).

Baptism is intended for adults, teens, and children who place their faith in Christ. The Church shall examine an individual's ability to understand the salvific work of Jesus Christ and to give witness to its occurrence in his or her life. Thus, baptism is for all who have professed a personal faith in Christ as Lord and Savior.

From a historical perspective, baptism is the New Covenant fulfillment of the Old Covenant ordinance of circumcision. Given as a part of the Abrahamic Covenant, Abraham "received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised" (Rom 4:11a). Circumcision was an outward expression of faithful dedication to God, a sign and seal of being a part of His chosen people. Likewise, baptism, under the New Covenant, instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, is an outward sign – a visible act signifying an invisible reality – and a seal – a mark of our adoption by God and dedication to Christ – of our faithful dedication to Christ as Lord and Savior, being a member of His chosen New Covenant people.

Baptism with water signifies and seals the believer's union into Christ (cf. Rom 6:3-4; Gal 3:26-27) and his or her partaking of the blessing of the covenant of grace, as well as a proclamation of the believer's faith and repentance. However, the sacrament of baptism has no power in its enactment, its tradition, or in its element (water). The sacrament of baptism, likewise, has not the power to save people from sin; salvation comes only through faith in the Person and sacrificial work of Jesus Christ. Baptism is not requisite for salvation. Rather, in baptism, the Holy Spirit, working through one's faith, seals (or marks) and strengthens the believer's spiritual participation and union with Christ (Rom 6:1-7) and conveys the spiritual presence of Jesus in a way that is unique to the sacrament.

Additionally, baptism with water is the proclamation and mark of having been baptized with the Holy Spirit. In that way, baptism signifies rebirth by the Spirit and the believer's ability to walk in newness of life by the power of the Spirit within them.

Baptism also unites the people of God with each other, as they are united with Christ through faith. In baptism, the believer is connected with the Church – the Body of Christ – throughout time and in every place, regardless of any demographic or worldly distinction. The benefit of baptism, similarly, is not only to the believer being baptized. But by participating in the celebration of another's baptism, those who look on in faith can be reminded to confess their ongoing need for God's grace in Christ and renew their pledge of obedience to Christ.

Symbolically, in baptism, the believer is plunged beneath the water, just as Christ was buried in the earth for the forgiveness of sin. Thereby, in faith, the believer symbolically dies to sin (Rom 6:11). The believer emerges from the water, just as Christ emerged from the tomb. Thereby, the believer is raised to new life (Col 2:12), free from the punishment and power of sin. In that way, the submergence in water represents death to sin, and the emergence from the water represents the new – holy and sanctified – life that follows salvation.

Therefore, because of the symbolic representation of burial and resurrection and because the Greek word *baptizo* means “to plunge, dip, or immerse in water,” the method of baptism by immersion is the regularly practiced mode at Forest Hill Church. However, the method of baptism can be adjusted to fit a personal desire or life situation.

Forest Hill Church desires to express/claim the covenant promises that God has for His people and their children. God has always worked in the context of families/community and believing parents are encouraged to claim these covenant promises for all of their children. For most, the claiming of these covenant promises may be found by the laying on of hands and blessings in a child dedication service.

As it relates to infant baptism or the baptism of those children who have not yet made a personal profession of faith, Forest Hill Church recognizes that God has a special relationship with children born into a Christian household (cf. 1 Cor 7:14). Forest Hill Church shall provide public blessings/dedications for those children at their parents' request, during which the “covenant promise” will be emphasized along with a time of prayer and dedicating these children to the Lord. The preferred practice of Forest Hill Church shall then be to offer dedication ceremonies for these children at the request of their parents. However, if, the child's parents should prefer their infants to be baptized, that choice shall be honored by Forest Hill Church as

long as both parents can articulate a knowledge of a Reformed understanding of baptism and commitment to their child coming to a personal saving faith in Christ as lord and savior.

For those who have been baptized as a believer in a Christian church (regardless of denomination), there is no requirement to be baptized again. Baptism is largely understood as a one-time proclamation of faith in Jesus Christ and a sacrament declaring His covenant faithfulness to believers, however if a believer was baptized as an infant or small child but wants to be baptized as a believing adult, they can request baptism to make a public profession of their faith.

The sacrament of baptism shall be performed by – or overseen by – an ordained pastor or elder who has been given authority by the Council of Elders to administer this sacrament.

### *The Practice of Baptism*

The sacrament of baptism is regularly observed as a part of – preceding, during, or following – a worship service. The frequency of administering this sacrament shall be determined by the Executive Leadership Team in consultation with the campus pastors, under the guidance of the Council of Elders.

The sacrament of baptism shall be overseen – if not directly led – by an ordained pastor.

Though the following instructions will be from the perspective of baptism by immersion as a part of a worship service, baptism can be done by other means (e.g. sprinkling or pouring) as needed based on life circumstances or as requested by the person or family of the person being baptized.

In preparation for the celebration of this sacrament, a baptismal pool will be erected/prepared and filled with water, located in a public venue where the Church may gather, look on and rejoice in the sacrament.

As a part of the celebration of baptism, the leader shall briefly remind the believer who is to be baptized, as well as the collected Church, of the significance and meaning of baptism. All people gathered should be reminded of the significance of his or her own baptism, their humble need for Christ because of sin and to draw strength from Christ. The leader may then read a selection of Scripture and pray for the believers and the gathered Church.

Upon having the believer join him or her in the baptismal pool, the leader shall introduce the believer to the Church. The leader shall then ask the believer the following questions:

- Do you confess that you are a sinner in need of a Savior?
- Do you profess that Jesus Christ is your personal Lord and Savior who died for the forgiveness of sins and was raised to new life?
- Do you turn from the ways of sin and renounce evil?
- Do you affirm that you will walk with Jesus Christ, following His commands and showing His love by the power of His Spirit in you?

Upon receiving an affirmative response to all questions above, the leader shall speak the believer's name and proclaim, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the

Holy Spirit. Amen.” Either follower or concurrent with this proclamation, the leader shall submerge the believer beneath the surface of the water and immediately assist him or her in emerging from the water.

The leader shall conclude in a time of prayer and then dismiss the baptized believers and the gathered Church.

## The Lord’s Supper

### *The Significance of the Lord’s Supper*

Instituted by our Lord and Savior (Lk 22:19-20) and affirmed by the Apostles (1 Cor 11:23-26), the Lord’s Supper – also known, as Communion or the Eucharist – is a sign and seal of the New Covenant, remembering the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness of sin as well as worshipping God for that act of grace. In this sacrament, the broken body and shed blood of our Lord and Savior are represented the bread and wine - Forest Hill Church utilizes grape juice in lieu of wine – respectively and are consumed by those who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The elements, in the observance of this sacrament, are not transubstantiated – meaning, the bread and juice are not changed in substance into the carnal body and blood of Jesus. Rather, this sacrament both carries symbolic significance and, through spiritual participation with Christ (1 Cor 10:16-17), conveys spiritual blessings to those who, by faith, partake in a worthy manner.

From a historical perspective, the Lord’s Supper is the New Covenant fulfillment of the Passover, from the Old Covenant. The Passover, established by God (Ex 12:14) and observed by the Lord Jesus (Mt 26:17, Lk 22:7-8), was a holy celebration, commemorating the rescue of the first-born child of faithful Hebrew families by the sacrifice of a lamb and the liberation of the Hebrew people from Egyptian enslavement. God established a festival and meal as a means to remember and celebrate His acts of mercy (Ex 12) and as a precursor to the coming of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29, 36; Heb 9:11-15, 10:1-14) who would deliver those who would believe in Him from death and their bondage to sin.

During the Passover meal on the night before His crucifixion, the Lord Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper as a recurrent commemoration of His death and as a sign of the New Covenant. In so doing, He honored the Law of God in celebrating the Passover, a “festival to the Lord – a lasting ordinance” (Ex 12:14) and also presented Himself as the fulfillment of the Passover Lamb – His broken body and spilled blood as the realization of the New Covenant (Lk 22:19-20).

The Lord’s Supper also looks forward in anticipation to the wedding feast of the Lamb (Rev 19:7-10) wherein the Church will be invited into the glorious presence of God and be blessed. The Church expectantly hopes and prays for the day when the Lord Jesus returns in glory and they will be invited to recline at the table of the Almighty (Mt 26:29; Lk 12:37; cf. Jn 13:3-5).

In observing this sacrament, the Holy Spirit conveys the spiritual blessings and presence of Christ to the believer that partakes of the elements in a worthy manner. In that way, the Lord’s Supper is a means of experiencing and growing in the grace of God. Much like our bodies are

strengthened by the bread and wine (or juice), when we partake of the elements, our spirits are strengthened by the spiritual presence of Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Through this sacrament, therefore, we experience communion with Christ, a reunion with God and His presence with us to our enjoyment and to His glory. The faith of the believer, though weak, is graciously supported by the Holy Spirit working through the sacrament.

When we observe this sacrament as an act of corporate worship, we not only experience communion with the living Lord Jesus, but are also experiencing communion and unity with our spiritual family, the Church. Through the act of sharing communion in the Lord's Supper, we are demonstrating the fellowship of Christ, His Body, the Church.

The Holy Spirit mediates the blessings of this sacrament to believers who partake of the elements in a worthy manner. Conversely, those who by participating in the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner make a mockery of the sacrament and profanely disrespect Jesus, bring upon themselves the Lord's judgment (cf. 1 Cor 11:27-32). Though it is true that the Lord's Supper is not a privilege for the worthy but for undeserving sinners, access to the Lord's Table is given to those who come in faith, repentance, and love. Even those who possess doubts or whose trust in Christ may be wavering may observe the Lord's Supper in order to be reassured of God's love and strengthened by His grace through the Holy Spirit.

Those who would worthily partake in the Lord's Supper would first profess Jesus Christ as his or her Lord and Savior. That is, the sacrament is for those who are believers in and followers of Jesus Christ. This distinction is not related to a particular denomination, but an inward response of faith and repentance directed towards Jesus Christ. Children may participate in the Lord's Supper at their parents' discretion; however, the child's parents must be assured of his or her child's profession of faith in Jesus Christ.

A person who would take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner would also examine himself or herself (1 Cor 11:28), discerning his or her need to trust in Jesus, confess and repent of known sins, seek reconciliation from those who offended them (cf. Mk 11:25, Mt 5:23-24), and be renewed in the grace and assurance of faith that comes from God.

### *The Practice of the Lord's Supper*

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is regularly observed in two main venues – (1) as a part of a corporate worship service and (2) within Bridge Groups. The elements should be prepared in advance and placed on a table until the time to observe the sacrament comes.

### The Practice of the Lord's Supper in Corporate Worship

The frequency of the commemoration within worship services shall be determined by the Senior Leadership Team, in consultation with the campus pastors, under the guidance of the Council of Elders.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is overseen – if not, directly led – by an ordained pastor; hereafter referred to as “leader.” As a part of the worship service, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper should always be in conjunction with the reading of the Word of God and with prayer.



It is good practice for the church to give at least one week's notice prior to the observance of this sacrament, so that believers may have the a greater opportunity to prepare and examine their hearts before partaking of the elements. In preparation, a large loaf or piece of bread shall be made ready for breaking and the juice (or wine) shall be poured into a cup.

The leader shall provide instruction in the nature and meaning of the sacrament as well as a solemn warning to those who are not prepared to partake. Included in these instructions shall be a statement that the Lord's Supper is intended for professing believers in Christ only, and these instructions can also include an invitation for those who have not yet professed faith in Him to do so at that time. The leader will then direct the congregation in a time of preparation through examining their hearts and their inner spiritual lives, confessing and repenting of sin as well as asking the Holy Spirit to draw them into the presence of Christ.

After a time of reflection and self-examination, the leader presents the elements (bread and a cup of juice/wine) and speaks words of institution, as found in 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 or as guided by the instructions/words below:

*The leader holds up a loaf of bread and breaks it.*

The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread,  
And after giving thanks to God,  
He broke it, and gave it to His disciples, saying:  
"Take, eat.  
This is My body, given for you.  
Do this is remembrance of Me.

*The leader holds up a cup.*

In the same way, He took the cup, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,  
Shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.  
Whenever you drink it,  
Do this in remembrance of me.

Every time you eat this break and drink this cup,  
You proclaim the saving death of the risen Lord,  
Until He comes.

After the words of institution are spoken, the elements can either be served directly by the leader or may be distributed to elders and/or deacons who will serve them to the congregation. The Council of Elders may appoint other godly people to distribute the elements to worshipers, if no deacons or elders are available to serve.

In instances wherein the deacons, elders, or others distribute the elements directly to the worshipers, they should be guided by the following instructions:

Upon handing the bread to the worshiper, the server should say,  
"This is Christ's body, given for you."

Upon presenting the cup of wine or juice, the server should say, “This is Christ’s blood, shed for the forgiveness of your sins.”

Following a time of private prayer and self-examination, the leader shall close in a prayer of thanksgiving and praise. The service may then conclude with a song of praise and thanksgiving and be dismissed with a benediction.

### The Practice of the Lord’s Supper in a Bridge Group

The Council of Elders has approved Bridge Group Leaders to administer communion in their Bridge Groups. The leaders must be members of Forest Hill Church, are professing believers and have been trained by a member of the Adult Discipleship Team. No other Bridge Group member, unless an elder or deacon, is permitted to administer the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. As such, the frequency of observing this sacrament is to the discretion of the Bridge Group Leader.

The Bridge Group Leader should give the Bridge Group at least a week’s notice before observing communion and direct the group in how to prepare to partake of the elements. This advance notice allows the group members time to prepare their hearts and examine their spiritual lives before taking the elements.

During the Bridge Group meeting, the Leader shall openly declare the meaning and significance of the sacrament. He or she shall also inform the group that the Lord’s Supper is an observance only for those who profess belief in Christ for the forgiveness of his or her sins and who have examined themselves, as per the descriptions above. The Bridge Group Leader shall then direct the group in a time of reflective examination, confession and prayer. These confessions and prayers can be private or may be made out loud.

After a time of confession and prayer, the Bridge Group Leader shall read the words of institution from 1 Corinthians 11:23-29. During this time, the elements are presented (lifted or held up). He or she may also read other passages that focus on the atoning death of Christ, such as Isaiah 53 or John 19, in addition to the words of institution. The Leader directs members to dip the bread in the cup, rather than drink from the cup directly.

The Bridge Group Leader may choose to serve each individual Bridge Group members or may choose to pass the elements around the group and have members serve each other.

At the conclusion of the sacrament, the Bridge Group Leader shall direct the group in a corporate prayer or song of thanksgiving and praise.

### **Section 2: Statement of God’s grace and forgiveness extended to brokenness in all areas**

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-

11). We believe that as image bearers of God, every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31).

Regardless of differing beliefs, hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any person or group are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Forest Hill Church.

Forgiveness is continually available through our Savior, Jesus Christ, and Forest Hill Church passionately desires to communicate God's love, mercy, that and grace through Christ, regardless of a person's past. That act of submission and acceptance is evidenced by a sincere desire to learn and follow God's instructions for our lives. Actively pursuing, promoting or remaining in behavior contrary to God's Word is an open act of rebellion and unrepentance and cannot be condoned or supported by our church.

### **Section 3: Statement on the Sanctity of Human Life**

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life. (Ps. 139; Jer. 1:5; 22:3; Job 12:10; Luke 1:41; Acts 17:25)

Forest Hill longs to exhibit the practice of these beliefs and extend the mercy and grace of God in Christ through supportive and redemptive actions such as:

- developing a culture of fostering/adoption,
- supporting parents who have made the choice to give birth to their children despite difficult circumstances through benevolence and local partners, and
- providing counseling services for those dealing with grief, guilt and pain from past decisions to abort, and to consistently value and make space for all to be welcomed into the family of God through Christ.
- Planting campuses in immigrant neighborhoods and enabling their integration into the local community through English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and programming for children,
- Caring for those who are financially struggling or poor, through our benevolence fund and our partners.
- Training and deploying deacons to provide care and counseling during sickness and end of life seasons.

### **Section 4: Statement on Definition of Marriage and Gender**

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as described in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4).

We believe that all forms of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual and bisexual behavior, prostitution, bestiality, incest and the creation or use of pornography) are sinful and offensive to God (Lev:18; Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

Forest Hill Church deeply desires to support healthy marriages. We will do this by:

- providing significant opportunities for engaged couples to prepare for marriage through counseling and teaching,
- focusing the ministries of preaching, discipleship, and counseling on strengthening marriages and families, and
- offering emotionally safe, clinically excellent, grace-based pastoral counseling through our care and counseling ministry to help guide individuals, couples, and families who are experiencing brokenness.

## **Marriage Policy**

Because God has ordained marriage and defined it as the covenant relationship between one man, one woman (Gen. 2:18-25), and Himself, Forest Hill Church will only recognize marriages between a biological man and a biological woman. Further, the pastors and staff of Forest Hill Church shall only participate in weddings and solemnize marriages between one man and one woman. Finally, the facilities and property of Forest Hill Church shall only host weddings between one biological man and one biological woman, of which at least one is a member of this church, who has agreed by covenant to submit to the spiritual authority of the church by supporting its mission, vision and core beliefs as summarized in the Essentials of Faith in Article II and the Practices of our Faith outlined in this Article XVI.

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Forest Hill Church as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to Forest Hill's members, participants and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Forest Hill in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage and Gender (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:22).

## **Section 5: Statement on Human Reconciliation**

Humanity was created in the image of God, which encompasses all ethnicities, nationalities, tribes and languages (Gen. 2:7-8; Acts 17:26; Rev. 7:9) and designed to reflect the moral character of God and fulfill His sovereign purposes together. From our earliest history, humans have separated over visible distinguishing features (language, skin color, cultural practices, etc.) creating manmade divisions that distort the creative purposes of God for humanity as a whole. Any truly effective work of reconciliation is rooted in, and thus flows from, the grace of God through His sufficient redemptive/reconciling work completed through the atoning sacrifice of Christ (Rev. 5:9).

This Spirit-initiated work of grace enables reconciled humanity to reclaim their identity as created in the image of God which reflects His nature to accomplish His sovereign purpose. (Eph. 2:14-18; 1 Peter 1:9-12; Rev. 5:10). Reconciliation with each other is a necessary by product and proof of our reconciliation with God (Eph. 2:19-22; Phi. 2:1-4; 1 Jn. 3:14-18).

To facilitate this necessary change, FHC will

- disciple people to embrace and celebrate the equality and dignity of all people groups
- lean into existing partnerships with churches different from FHC in a much more intentional and sustained way,
- develop additional cross-cultural, multi-ethnic partnerships, and
- continue to develop our value of cultivating kingdom diversity.

## **Section 6: Policy on Use of Church Assets**

The church's assets (facilities, vehicles, services, staff, etc.) were provided through God's benevolence and by the sacrificial generosity of church members. The church desires that its assets be used for the fellowship of the Body of Christ and always to God's glory. Although the facilities are not generally open to the public, as a service and outreach to the community we occasionally make our assets available to approved non-member persons and groups as a witness to our faith, in a spirit of Christian charity, and as a means of demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in practice.

However, we will not permit our assets to be used by persons or groups holding, advancing, or advocating beliefs, or advancing, advocating, or engaging in practices that conflict with the church's faith or moral teachings, which are summarized in, among other places, the church's governance documents. Nor may assets be used for activities that contradict, or are deemed by the Council as inconsistent with, or contrary to the church's faith or moral teachings. The Council, or their official designee, is the final decision-maker on whether a person or group is allowed to use church assets. For the purposes of clarity, and to distinguish external usage of church assets, the core mission of the church and the focus of our worship services, care and counseling and benevolence activities are to reach and minister to the full spectrum of God's people: committed believers, seekers, and the lost and broken, all of whom may, at times be trapped in or struggling with behaviors contrary to our beliefs and teachings. We continually rely on our staff to minister to these people with love and care, and to lead them to faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Even then there may be times when a person is so disruptive or rebellious towards God that we are forced to reduce or stop offering those services for a time. What distinguishes these activities is that they are initiated by FHC and are intended to advance the core beliefs of the church, which is different than sponsoring, hosting or facilitating 3rd party activities which may be promoting or actively affirming behavior or beliefs contrary to our faith or moral teachings.

We believe that this restricted use policy is necessary for three important reasons:

a.) First, the church may not in good conscience materially cooperate in activities or beliefs that are contrary to its faith. Allowing its assets to be used for purposes that contradict the church's beliefs would be material cooperation with that activity, and would be a grave violation of the church's faith and religious practice. See 2 Corinthians 6:14; 1 Thessalonians 5:22.

b.) Second, it is very important to the church that it presents a consistent message to the community, which the church staff and members conscientiously maintain as part of their witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To allow assets to be used by groups or persons who express beliefs or engage in practices contrary to the church's faith would have a severe negative

impact on the message that the church strives to promote. It could also be a source of confusion and misinformation to church members and the community because they may reasonably perceive that by allowing use of our assets, the church is in agreement with the beliefs or practices of the persons or groups using church assets.

c.) Third, the sacrificial generosity of church members which provided for the purchase and maintenance of the church's assets were made in accordance with and support of the church's stated beliefs. It would be inconsistent and misleading to then use those assets for a purpose contrary to those beliefs.

The church believes that it is a part of worship to view and use all of its property as holy and set apart to the glory of God. See Colossians 3:17.

### **Approved Users and Priority of Use**

The Council or its official designee must approve all uses of the church assets. Priority shall generally be given to members of the church, their immediate families, and organized groups that are part of the ministry, organization, or sponsored activities of the church. Church facilities and equipment will be made available to non-members or outside groups meeting the following qualifications:

- Groups or persons requesting asset use must affirm that their beliefs and practices and planned uses of the assets are not in conflict with the church's faith and practice.
- The group or person seeking asset use must submit a signed "Church Facility/Equipment Reservation Request and Agreement" form.

The group or person seeking asset use must be willing to take responsibility for the facilities and equipment used and must agree to abide by the church's rules of conduct for facility use, as described in the church's Facility Use Guidelines any additional instructions by church staff.

## **Section 7: Policy on Community Outreach and Service**

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this document is to state the Forest Hill Church policy regarding community outreach and service, specifically when such activities are serving communities, countries, or populations in which there could be embedded illegal or unethical activities.

### **BACKGROUND:**

- From "The Forest Hill Purpose and Vision":
- Our purpose at Forest Hill is **to build bridges that connect Everyone to Dynamic Life in Christ**
- We work to accomplish this through:
  - Authentic worship based on exalting God and presenting His Gospel.
  - A desire to really know God through a deeper understanding of His Word.
  - Equipping people to learn how to reach friends, family and neighborhoods for Christ
- Our Vision is as God leads, we will renew the Carolinas and radiate Him to all nations by building His Church.

- The three pillars of the Forest Hill Church Outreach efforts:

- “GoLocal”

- “GoGlobal”

- Justice

- The 2014 SO THAT Campaign continues the call of Forest Hill to share His story of grace, redemption and hope So That more people in our communities will come to know Christ, grow in Christ and go for Christ. To accomplish this, we are building a permanent campus in Waxhaw and establishing a campus on South Boulevard oriented towards the growing Latino community.

## **RELEVANCE:**

The core Mission and Vision of FHC, the fundamental aspects of our Outreach programs, and the specific focus of periodic campus expansion activities, summarized above, all place our Church right where it should be: in the midst of a broken, lost and hurting world searching for a Savior. The reality of reaching people for Christ in all these areas, by definition, puts us in intentional contact with hurting people. Some of these people or the communities in which they live, are caught in various sinful and sometimes illegal or unethical activities.

Recognizing that “*ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23), we do not cancel our services, or screen people at the door to ensure they have not sinned or broken the law.

Since the mission of our Church is to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ, we follow Jesus’ example: “*When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.*” (Matthew 9:11-13)

Therefore the only difference between our weekend services and mission trips to countries rife with corruption should be a heightened awareness regarding the prevalence, nature and severity of the offenses. It is important to state our position relative to saving and serving the souls who live in those environments, at home and abroad.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Forest Hill Church will faithfully and fervently strive to reach and serve all of God’s people in the countries and locations where we feel God has called us.

It is not the Church’s mission or calling to navigate or interpret the nuances of the laws, nor do we possess the skill or authority to monitor or enforce those laws.

When the pursuit of this calling in areas of increasing complexity, our commitment, approach and intentions will remain the same -- we will use extra caution to avoid placing the Church, its staff or its members in compromising situations.

We endeavor to adhere to the following principles:

- Prayerful and courageous loyalty to God and His calling on our Church.
- Select areas of expansion, service and mission through the prayerful guidance of the leadership, staff and governing bodies of the Church as outlined in the GOVERNANCE DOCUMENT OF FOREST HILL CHURCH.
- Recognize that it is not the Church's calling or responsibility to sift or filter those whom we serve, nor to enforce the laws of the cities and countries in which we operate; only to serve Christ.
- Provide reasonable support and assistance, if requested, to those organizations that do have the responsibility to enforce those laws or rules, provided it does not compromise the fundamental principles of our faith.
- Exercise diligence to guard the reputation of God and FHC, in that order, but yet not let every public opinion to sway us from the path God has clearly called us to.
- Do not put FHC personnel or members into compromising positions where they would need to make personal decisions to navigate questionable activities.
- Provide guidance and oversight to ensure FHC entities or members are not directly enabling or assisting the breaking or avoidance of the law.
- Exercise judgment on the degree and gravity of activities in the communities in which we are involved.
- Utilize the existing FHC audit, governance and controls processes so that the Church's money and efforts are not viewed as directly in support of, or being redirected to illicit activities, but instead used as we intended.
- Strive to be proactive in outward communication – but not apologetic.

At certain points we may need to withdraw service activities because the items above or other factors become unmanageable. We will always be prayerful as we seek God's will and utilize the existing accountability and governance structures already in place in the church. That said, we will endeavor to act with boldness and not retreat from God's calling on the church because we fear criticism from the world.

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Proactive communication to the Church body or externally will be determined by the Council of Elders.
  - Depending on the urgency of the issue it may be advisable to issue a short overview to the Church via the weekend services and/or the FHC website
- Reactive communication based on periodic questions or issues directed at the Church will be handled by the appropriate Church leadership, including the Council of Elders where appropriate based on the sensitivity of the particular issue.