

# Membership 101



## **Forest Hills Baptist Church**

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# Session 1: Why Join a Church?

## Introduction

Many people are asking this question: Why bother joining a church? What is the big deal about church? Isn't the church just a dying institution irrelevant to the world today? Although many people question the importance of church and the importance of being a member of the church, the Bible tells us that the Church is the people of God on mission to transform the world through the Gospel (1 Pt 2:9). The church is the vehicle for displaying God's glory to the ends of the earth. Therefore the church is hugely important in God's plan for redeeming the world through his son Jesus Christ. Jesus tells us that the church will endure and survive as the uniquely blessed people of God and that the "gates of hell will not prevail against it". (Mat 16:18)

*Discussion Question: Why is the church so important in God's plan? Why do so many people seem uninterested in joining a church?*

For our first session of Membership 101 we are going to learn three important truths

1. The Foundation of the Church
2. The Purpose of the Church
3. The Mission of the Church

As we begin to study about God's wonderful formation and plans for His church we will see that the church is God's strategy for transforming the world as the Gospel of Jesus Christ spreads to the ends of the world.

In this first session we will also answer the question, "Who is Forest Hills Baptist Church?"

## The Foundation of the Church

*"As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." (1 Peter 2:4-6, ESV)*

*"Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood." (Acts 20:28, ESV)*

The Church was founded and established by Jesus Christ. Yet, we see that from the beginning of the Old Testament God had a grand plan to spread his glory through a corporate people. The first fruits of this cosmic plan was through Israel. As we move into the New Testament we see that God plans to create a new kingdom and a new humanity from people of every ethnicity and nation. The way that God created these new citizens of the heavenly kingdom was through the death of His son Jesus Christ. The cornerstone and foundation for the church is and always will be Jesus Christ.

### **Jesus the Cornerstone**

The Bible makes it clear why Jesus came. Jesus who was fully man and fully God came for the purpose of redeeming humanity. Jesus lived a life of complete perfection, without sin and without disobedience. Where you and I fail every day, Jesus succeeded. As a result, Jesus could be the only sacrifice who could pay the price for our sin. Every human being has fallen short and has rebelled against the Almighty God (Rom 3:23). We are hopelessly lost in our sin, yet God was gracious in sending Jesus to us. Jesus, out of love for us, went to the cross and was nailed to that tree for you and me. On the cross Jesus purchased our salvation and our freedom from the bondage of sin. On the cross Jesus purchased our entry way into this new community and new humanity. In Jesus we have been given citizenship into the kingdom of God. All we must do to receive this incredible gift from God is simply call out to Him in faith. We turn from our sins and put our trust in Jesus Christ. This is the entry point into the church and it is the *only way* to belong to the people of God.

The church is established by Jesus. His death is the founding stone upon which the church is built.. You see the church can often be made up of a variety of people of different ethnicities, education levels, social backgrounds, and many other things. Yet the One who brings these diverse people together is Jesus Christ. Often times there are a variety of areas on which people build community. People might build community on a special interest like a hobby or a special cause, but the church is a people united by Jesus Christ. The founding stone, Jesus, brings us all together and forms us into a new people called the Church.

### **Local vs Universal**

The church can be seen in two light: There is the Church universal, made up of all believers in Jesus Christ at all times and the church local, which is made up of specific believers at a specific place. All true Christians belong to the Church (universal) but not every Christian belongs to the church (local). This is important to remember that being a member of a church does not grant you entrance into God's kingdom, only Jesus does that. Yet, the church is made up of people who have received salvation through Jesus. So Forest Hills Baptist Church is a part of the Universal Church but Forest Hills is a local church, a local visible portion of the people of God in the city of Wilson, NC.

*Discussion Question: Why do you think it is important that Jesus is the foundation of the church? How can do you make Jesus the foundation of your life?*

# The Purpose of the Church

The ultimate purpose of the church is to display God's glory. This happens as the church worships God, disciples and trains other believers to maturity, and proclaims the Gospel through evangelism and missions. The purpose of the Church is to worship, disciple, and evangelize.

## Ministry to God: Worship

As a people formed and created for the glory of God, worship is the essential duty of the church. Scripture reminds us of the importance of corporate worship in the life of the church. Colossians 3:16 Paul tells us to "sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thanksgiving in your hearts to God". We are also told "to live for the praise of his glory" (Eph 1:12).

It is vital for those who belong to the church to worship the Lord. This is why at Forest Hills we meet every Sunday morning and evening. The purpose of this time is for one reason to worship the Lord. We want to praise and honor the Redeemer of our souls and give our lives to him in worship. Our worship services are centered around the Gospel message as revealed in the Bible. As a result, preaching is heavily emphasized because as God's people we need to hear from God's word. In addition we sing together, singing about our God. Our worship also includes the giving of our finances showing God that He is first.

## Ministry to Believers: Discipleship

The Church also has the task of training and building up other believers to Christian maturity. The church should seek to make every man and woman mature in Christ Jesus (Col 1:28). The way believers are built up and made mature in Christ is through the teaching of God's word to the corporate body of Christ.

*"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17, ESV)*

The Scriptures are essential if we seek to grow in our relationship with Christ. As a result, at Forest Hills we value heavily the teaching of the Scriptures. We offer a variety of different Sunday School classes and Bible studies to help train our members in the Scriptures so they may be complete and equipped for every good work. In addition it is also vital that believers learn to minister to one another in community. Discipleship happens best, not in a class room, but through relationships. As a result, we seek to help our members build relationships with one another so that they can grow deeper together in their relationship with Jesus.

## **Ministry to the World: Evangelism**

The church also has the great purpose of proclaiming the good news of Jesus to the world. This is our greatest task given to us by Jesus. We are called to go and tell others about Jesus Christ. The task of the church is to make sure others hear about how they can have salvation in Jesus.

*“How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:14–17, ESV)*

The Bible makes it clear that every Christian has the responsibility of making sure this good news is heard across the world. In order for people to be saved through faith, they first must hear about what Jesus has done. As Forest Hills Baptist Church we desire to train every member for this task of sharing the Gospel. Evangelism is not just the task for missionaries or pastors but for every believer.

*Discussion Questions: What are some ways Christians get confused about the purpose of the church? Why do you think it is so hard to stay focused on our purpose as a church?*

## **The Mission of the Church**

The mission of the church is found in Matthew 28:18–20. The resurrected Lord, before he ascended into heaven, gave this charge to the church:

*“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”” (Matthew 28:18–20, ESV)*

## **A Great Commission Church**

Forest Hills Baptist Church seeks to be a Great Commission Church. We want to take seriously the honor and responsibility of making disciples of all nations. We know this can feel like an overwhelming task, but people need to hear about Jesus. We are confident that God will be with us as we seek to be a Great Commission church. We want to train our members to be missionaries in their communities and we want to support and send missionaries across the world so that the world can know Jesus.

## **God's Glory Displayed in the Church**

As the Church faithfully proclaims and lives out the Gospel, God's glory will spread to the ends of the earth. As people come to know Christ and join God in his mission to redeem the world, God will cover the earth with his worshipers. At Forest Hills Baptist Church we want to be used by God for his glory. We know that this will happen as we work together as the people of God working in unity on the foundation of our cornerstone, Jesus Christ. We are a sinful people redeemed and forgiven by Jesus. Jesus is the hope of the world and the church is God's ordained means of taking that hope to the ends of the earth.

## **So Why Join a Church?**

So why would you want to join a church? Why would you want to join Forest Hills Baptist Church? Well, part of the reason is because it is biblically commanded. To not join a local body of believers is to be disobedient to the God's command. Hebrews 10:24-25 states we are commanded not to forsake the assembling together. So joining a local church as a member is something commanded by God, but it is much sweeter than just a rule to follow.

So why would you join a church? You desire to join a church Because God has given you salvation by His grace through Jesus, and you want to share that good news with others. You want to join yourself to the people of God to whom Jesus has bound you. You want to lock arms with other believers to worship the Lord, to grow in maturity together, and to work together to tell the world about our savior. As the church achieves its mission, we have the promise that Christ will be with us and that nothing will stop us. Businesses will go bankrupt and nations will collapse, but the church, the redeemed people of God, will survive for eternity as God's glory is displayed through us.

So why join a church? Why would you not want to?

## **Who is Forest Hills Baptist Church?**

### **History**

Forest Hills Baptist Church as a rich legacy of many generations of faithful Christians who sought to impact this area for Christ. As we, Forest Hills Baptist, moves into the future God has for us, we will never forget or cease to praise God for the faithful Christians who came before us. A fully detailed history of our church is recorded in the appendix of your book.

### **Denomination**

Forest Hills Baptist Church belongs to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). The SBC is a group of thousands of baptist churches who pull their resources together to fulfill the Great Commission. We believe that we can do more together for the Gospel than we can just as individual churches. A portion of our annual budget goes to a SBC mission called the Cooperative Program which funds all the ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention. We also do a few special offerings a year that goes to fund the missionaries of the Southern Baptist Convention. The Southern Baptist Convention is one of the largest denominations in our country and we are proud to partner with the SBC to take the Gospel to the nations. In addition, we also partner with a local association of SBC Churches in the South Roanoke Baptist Association.

## **Theology**

At Forest Hills Baptist Church we take our theology very seriously. In order to be a member of our church you must affirm our doctrinal statement, the Baptist Faith and Message 2000. This doctrinal statement can be found in the appendix and is also listed on our website. Please take the time to read through our statement of faith and if there are any questions please speak with one of our pastors.

## **Church Covenant**

Forest Hills also has a church covenant. This covenant outlines how the relationship between members look in the life of our congregation. When you join our church you agree to live by this covenant. Lets read through the covenant together which is found in the appendix of your book.

*Discussion Question: Are there any questions you have about Forest Hills Baptist Church?*

# Session 2: How Do I Become A Church Member?

Today we are going to answer the question, “How do I become a member of Forest Hills Baptist Church?” In order to look at the specifics of how to become a church member, we need to first see what the Scripture says about becoming a member of the Church. There is a lot of confusion about church membership. Many think of church membership as entrance into a country club or they think of church membership as a special club entitled to certain benefits. With all the confusion over what it means to be a member of the church, it will be best to start with Scripture.

## The Bible on Church Membership

Benjamin Merkle provides a great definition of what the Bible teaches on Church Membership:

*Simply stated, church membership is a formal commitment to a local church. In other words, it is a covenant between an individual and the local church. This covenant should affirm that the new member has made a credible profession of faith, that the church is committed to shepherd the new member, and that the new member is committed to meet regularly with the church and obey its leadership.*

As we look at the biblical evidence something is clear right from the beginning. Church membership is not explicitly taught in the Bible, but implicitly. There is no command “thou shall become a church member” but it is assumed as we look at the behavior and structure of the early church. There are several passages that help give us a picture of church membership in the New Testament Church.

### 1. Leaders are Shepherds who Watch Over the Flock of God

In other words, pastors are to be leaders who watch over the people of God therefore they must know who is in their flock. There is a clear understanding of who the leaders are and who is in the flock. In 1 Peter 5:2, Peter tells the pastors to “shepherd the flock of God that is among you”. A shepherd cannot be a shepherd unless he knows who is in his flock. If there is no clear designation of who the sheep are, how can shepherds watch over their flock?

### 2. The Early Church Appears to Have Kept Numbers and Lists

There are several places where numbers are stated in the New Testament, including the idea of keeping lists.

*“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.” (Acts 2:41, ESV)*

*“praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47, ESV)*

*“Let a widow be enrolled if she is not less than sixty years of age, having been the wife of one husband,” (1 Timothy 5:9, ESV)*

The early church was keeping up with numbers and 1 Timothy tells us that apparently there is some sort of enrollment for widows as well. If the early church kept a list of their widows, it is logical to assume that they also kept a list of the members as well.

### **3. The Practice of Church Discipline**

Another strong evidence for church membership is the concept of church discipline. We see that the early church would lovingly remove people from their community when they refused to repent from their sin. In Matthew 18 Jesus Himself lays out the practice of church discipline. The third and final stage of church discipline is removal from the church community. In 1 Corinthians 5:12–13 Paul instructs the church to “purge the evil person from among you”. Because of the practice of church discipline resulting in the expulsion from the community, it is easy to see that the early church knew who was a part of the local church and who was not.

*Discussion Questions: Why do you think many people struggle with the idea of church membership? How does your understanding of church membership change after looking at what the Bible teaches?*

## **Requirements for Membership**

The requirement to be a church member is to be a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Every church member should be someone who has received salvation by putting their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. As a Baptist church, Forest Hills believes in regenerate church membership, simply meaning that every member is to be a believer of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the One who brings us together through his death and resurrection. Therefore to belong to the body of Christ means you have received the forgiveness that He offers.

Many wrongly think that church membership equals salvation. This is simply not the case. Being a church member does not save you, only faith in Jesus Christ. Obedient Christians should seek to belong to the community of Christ at a local church. They should commit themselves to a local church to serve others and to be served by the community. As a church member you come under the care of the pastors and the church body.

Membership is a *covenant* relationship that involves commitment and dedication to the church. As a member you commit to attend regularly and be involved in worship and community at Forest Hills Baptist Church. As a member you commit to give financially to help fund and support the ministry of this church. As a member you commit to serve with your time and gifts for the cause of Christ.

# Benefits of Membership

So if church membership is biblical, what sort of benefits does it have? Why is it important to have a healthy understanding of church membership? A healthy, biblical understanding of church membership provides a lot of benefits not only to the individual but also the church.

## Benefits to the Individual

### 1. Healthy Membership gives us Assurance

One of the great gifts of healthy church membership is that it can help give us assurance of our salvation. Membership in the church is a privilege reserved only for those who have confessed Jesus as their Lord and Savior and who live in obedience to him. Not everyone is able to be a church member, only those saved by Jesus. As a church with healthy church membership, it gives great assurance to church members because the church is saying that “yes, we believe that you have received salvation and have been transformed by the grace of God.”

As a church if we allow you to become a member and continue as a member, it is an indicator that as a church we have observed good fruit in your life that provides evidence of your salvation. In this way, healthy church membership can give you assurance that you have indeed experienced the grace of God.

### 2. Healthy Membership Gives us Protection

When biblical church membership is understood by the church, it provides great protection to the members. Members join a church and come under the protection of the pastors. Pastors have the responsibility of protecting their flock, not only from false doctrine but also from their own sin. When you join a church, you agree for the pastors of Forest Hills to keep watch over your souls, because as pastors they are men who must give account to God. (Heb 13:17)

### 3. Healthy Membership Fuels our Growth

When every member of the church understands his or her function and role, it increases the growth of the entire church. The Bible describes the church in a variety of different ways, but one of the most peculiar ways is the human body. Just like a body with a variety of different parts that each have their own function, so to it is with the church.

*“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.” (Romans 12:4–5, ESV)*

As each member serves in their own gifting in their own area our spiritual growth is fueled. We will grow deeper into the knowledge of Christ and we will continue to reach new levels of transforming grace in our lives!

## **Benefits to the Church**

Healthy, biblical church membership also provides some benefits to the entire church as well. As a member, the church is not just about you, but about the whole people of God. Not only does church membership provide benefits to you as an individual, it also helps the entire body be healthy and obedient in the mission of God.

### **1. Healthy Membership Protects the Purity of the Church**

The local church is to be the distinct, unique, holy, and set apart people of God. Members are to live their lives in a way that is separate from the rest of the culture around them. The purity of the church is vital for a church to fulfill the Great Commission. Maintaining that all members are to be faithful believers in Jesus Christ makes sure that we as a whole people are living for the glory of God. Listen to Peter's words:

*“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”*  
(1 Peter 2:9–10, ESV)

Peter describes how God has set aside the church as a “chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation”. This distinction is vital to what it means to be the people of God. And we also see the importance of the purity of the church, this is another reason healthy membership is vital to the church.

### **2. Healthy Membership Preserves the Witness of the Church**

Something every Christian has heard at some point is that all Christians are hypocrites. Unfortunately, it is a saying that often times proves true. When you look at the membership of a local church you often find people who are just as sinful and disobedient as those who are lost and don't know Christ. This is a great travesty. When the church loses its distinction and purity, the church loses its credibility and influence. In order for our church to proclaim the Gospel with any sort of integrity we must preserve the purity of our church and the witness of our church to the lost and dying world.

Notice that Peter says that we are a holy nation so “that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him”. The purity of the church is connected to the evangelistic effectiveness of the church.

### **3. Healthy Membership Increases the Spiritual Vitality of the Church**

When members are examined to be sure they are believers, when every member is serving in obedience to Jesus Christ, and when sin is confronted in the life of every believer, the spiritual vitality of the church is increased. The sin that so often divides and hurts will be addressed and covered in forgiving grace. Healthy church membership will

increase the spiritual health of the church in its effectiveness in evangelism and to the members spiritual growth.

### **Benefits to Leaders**

Healthy church membership is also beneficial to the church's leadership, especially the pastors. The Bible is quite clear that pastors are men who must give account to God for the flock under their care. God holds these men responsible for the spiritual condition of those under their care. They have the responsibility not only to protect their members but also to confront them in their sin. A key passage in understanding this idea is Hebrews 13:17:

*“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.” (Hebrews 13:17, ESV)*

Pastors will have to give account to God for their flock. As a result, church membership needs to be taken very seriously. This is not only for the pastor's joy, but also to the advantage of the church and the individual. Merkle again comments on the importance of church membership in response to this passage. He writes,

*If this is the case, then it is absolutely vital for leaders to know whom they are responsible to shepherd. Are they accountable for those who attend a worship service once, twice, or for six months? The seriousness of this verse does not allow for any guesswork. By not formally joining a church, a person is essentially communicating to the leadership that they do not want to be held accountable. In contrast, when a Christian becomes a member of a church, he is placing himself under the watch care of leaders who are given the task of shepherding his soul and are accountable to God for their work.<sup>1</sup>*

*Discussion Question: In your opinion what is the biggest benefit of church membership to the church? to your personal life?*

## **Membership at Forest Hills Baptist Church**

Church Membership is something we take very seriously at Forest Hills Baptist Church. It is a privilege reserved only for those who have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. To become a members at Forest Hills we require you to do the following:

1. ***Be a Baptized Believer in Jesus Christ.*** We want to hear your testimony and how Jesus Christ has transformed your life. We want to hear how God has saved you by His grace. In addition, we require that you be baptized as a believ-

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<sup>1</sup> Merkle, Benjamin L.. Those who must give an account: a study of church membership and church discipline. Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2012. 32

er in a like-minded church. If not, Forest Hills will present you as a baptismal candidate to be baptized in one of our services.

2. **Agree with the Doctrine and Theology of Forest Hills Baptist Church.** In order to be a member we require you to agree with our doctrine and statement of Faith. We hold to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, which is a statement of faith laying out the doctrines we believe. We require that church members hold to these theological beliefs and teach and live by their truthfulness accordingly.
3. **Submit to the Spiritual Authority of the Pastors and Leadership in the Church.** As a congregational church, every member has a voice in selecting and affirming the leadership of the church yet, we ask that the membership affirm and subject themselves to the leadership of the church. They are the authority God has placed over Forest Hills Baptist Church for the good of the people and for the glory of God. Again, they are those who must give account to God.

If you would like to join Forest Hills Baptist Church we would like for you to do the following:

1. Write out a one page testimony of how you came to be saved by Jesus Christ, explaining what Jesus has done for you.
2. Set up a meeting with one of the pastors at Forest Hills Baptist for an interview.
3. Be presented to the church in a Sunday Morning during the invitation for membership.

*Discussion Question: Do you have any questions about how to become a member at Forest Hills Baptist Church?*

# Session 3: What is Expected of a Church Member?

## Introduction

As a potential member at Forest Hills Baptist Church there are certain expectations that come in being a member. Many think of church membership as some sort of privileged society in which you come to be served but never to serve. Yet the church is a community that serves one another in the name of Christ Jesus. At Forest Hills, we want to increase the expectations we have on our members in their obedience to Jesus and their participation in the community of the church. There are five areas that we expect members to fulfill.

## Holiness

We expect you to live a life of holiness. As a Christian, who has been saved and redeemed by the grace of God, the proper response is joyful obedience. In our Christian life we are continually being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This means we must take a posture of continual repentance, seeking to purge our lives from any sin, and seeking to be fully obedient to the commands of Jesus. We do this not out of legalism or some sort of works based salvation, but out of joy. Knowing that in Christ Jesus we have received everything, it is our delight to live our lives for the One who gave everything for us!

Throughout the Scriptures, we see the importance of holiness in the life of the believer. Here are a few examples:

*“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Romans 12:1–2, ESV)*

*“but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one’s deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,” (1 Peter 1:15–17, ESV)*

In our exile as we live our lives on the earth, waiting for our eternal home, we are to be holy as God is holy. We are not to be conformed to the sinful patterns displayed in the world, but we are to be transformed by the Gospel grace we have received by faith.

So as a member of Forest Hills Baptist Church, we will expect you to seek after holiness. Now, this does not mean that we expect you to be perfect. Sin continues to be a struggle for all of us in this life; yet in love as a church, we will confront you in your sin and urge you to repent. Unrepentant sin in the life of a professed believer in Jesus is an indicator of an unconverted heart. For example if unrepentant sin such as sexual sin, pornography, or adultery is discovered in your life, the church will approach you in love to beg you to repent and return to Jesus. Unrepentant sin is grounds for church discipline and even expulsion from the body of Forest Hills Baptist Church. Yet all sins are covered by the grace of God. As a church we will always accept with open arms any sinner who turns from sin and trusts in Jesus Christ.

*Discussion Question: In your life, how can you seek after holiness? Is there any sin in your life you need to repent and turn over to Christ?*

## Participation

We expect you to participate in the life of the church. This means that you regularly attend worship on Sunday morning and get involved in community in Sunday School. It is vital for the health of your spiritual life and for the spiritual life of the church that you regularly participate in worship with the Church. The Bible again emphasizes this principle:

*“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:24–25, ESV)*

We must not neglect meeting together. As we meet together, we do so to encourage one another to love and to good works. When you fail to regularly attend worship not only does your own spiritual life suffer from the lack of Christian community, but the whole church suffers without your encouragement and impact in the community.

We also encourage our members to come out to our Sunday night service usually led and taught by Pastor Justin at 6 PM. It is a special time of worship and great bible study and informal dialogue with the pastor.

Not only do we need your participation in worship, but also in our church business meetings. These meetings happen quarterly on our church at Wednesday night to make important decisions on the life of our church. At Forest Hills, it is the church membership who prayerfully direct our church as we set priorities in ministries and finances. Although these meetings may seem tedious to some, it is vital to the health of the church that every member participates in this vital area of our church.

*Discussion Questions: How can you prioritize your participation in the life of the church? Why is it so easy for us to prioritize other activities rather than Christ's Church?*

## Serving

The Church expects you to be involved in serving. At FHBC we believe that every member is a minister. Ministry is not reserved for just pastors and seminary graduates, but for every Christian; therefore to be a member at Forest Hills, you are expected to get involved in serving our church. In order to do the mission God has given us to make disciples of all nations, we need your help! Every Christian has unique gifts and skills that can be used for the spread of the Gospel. As a member of Forest Hills Baptist you are expected to serve in accordance with your gifting. When the body of Christ is serving in unity according to its gifts, the church flourishes in its ministry. Listen to the words of Paul in Romans:

*“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.” (Romans 12:6–8, ESV)*

Paul instructs the church that we must serve in accordance with our gifting. Every Christian has certain spiritual gifts and natural gifts that they can use to serve the Lord. Some have the spiritual gift of teaching, hospitality, or encouragement. Others may have the natural gifts of music, art, or technology. No matter what your gifting may be, we want to find a way to use your God given gifts for his glory in the ministry of Forest Hills Baptist Church!

Before you leave this class we would like to get you started in serving in an area of our church. Over the next week be thinking about an area in which you might be able to serve. A good starting point is one of our Sunday morning volunteer teams. These teams help make our Sunday morning activities happen. They include:

- Parking Team
- Greeting Team
- Welcome Center Team
- Coffee Team
- A/V Team
- Worship Team
- Usher Team

If you are interested in one of the listed volunteer teams we have a one page description available for you at the welcome center. In addition, there are many opportunities for serving in which you can get involved in ministering to the next generation. If you'd like to get involved in serving in our preschool, children, or youth ministry there is an application you can pick up at the welcome center. You can fill it out and drop it off at the welcome center when completed.

Next week, We will go through in more detail in the areas in which you can begin serving. Come prepared to make a selection on how want to get involved using your gifts and abilities to serve the Lord at Forest Hills Baptist church.

*Discussion Questions: Why is it important that every member gets involved in serving? What happens when church members stops serving? How does it affect the life of the church?*

## Giving

We expect members to be faithfully giving financially to the church. To carry out the ministry God has asked us to do as a church requires financial resources. To keep the building open, pay for the staff, fund the ministries, and fund missions, requires considerable financial resources. Finances is an area of our lives in which we often get uncomfortable with; yet it is an area Jesus addressed often. In the sermon on the mount Jesus taught about the importance of our treasure:

*“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19–21, ESV)*

Our money follows our heart. We may say that we love God and we care about other people hearing the Gospel and receiving salvation, but, for most of us, our check books call us a liar. At Forest Hills we expect our members to faithfully give to the ministry of this church. A good minimum starting point is the Old Testament principle of a tithe. A tithe is 10% of your gross income that you take and give to the Lord as an offering. So for example, if you make \$50,000 a year, your annual tithe should be \$5,000. If that is the case, then your monthly tithe should be \$417.00.

It is a simple concept, but one that is very difficult for us to put into practice often because our hearts are laced with materialism and selfishness. There is no better investment we can make than in the Kingdom of God. We will not only see the rewards of our obedience in this life, but in the life to come. The 10% tithe should be the starting point for every Christian. As the Lord blesses us with more and more resources, rather than increasing our standard of living we should seek to increase our standard of giving. Prayerfully consider what God will lead you to give to support his work through Forest Hills Baptist Church.

In addition to the regular budget account to which you give your monthly tithe, there is also the God's Light on the Hill Program or the GLOTH that goes to paying off the building. We are currently so close to being done with the mortgage once and for all! Many members give above and beyond their tithe to the GLOTH account. We encourage you to do the same.

As a member of Forest Hills, giving and proper stewardship is expected. Giving is not some heavy burden, but a great joy as we pool our financial resources together to spread the glory of God to the ends of the earth through our ministry.

*Discussion Questions: Is giving something that comes naturally to you or is it a challenge? How can we be good stewards of our money and make sure we put God first in our finances?*

## **Evangelism**

We expect every member to be active in evangelism. Evangelism is the sharing of the good news of Jesus with others. We believe that every Christian is to be a missionary, taking the good news of Jesus to those who need to hear. God has placed you around different people and in unique situations in order to be an ambassador for Christ. Every member should seek out relationships in which they can share the hope of Jesus Christ. This can be through starting a Bible study at work or in your neighborhood, inviting a family to your house for dinner, or simply as inviting people to church. The apostle Paul again emphasizes the importance of evangelism in Romans 10. He writes,

*“For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!” But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed what he has heard from us?” So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” (Romans 10:13–17, ESV)*

It is expected that every church member be active in taking the good news of the Gospel to those who need to hear it. So that the Spirit of God will save the lost call on the name of Jesus Christ to save them. Every Christian should be active in missions and evangelism and every member of Forest Hills should do the same as well!

*Discussion Questions: Have you ever thought of yourself as a missionary? Why or why not? How can you be more active in sharing the Gospel with others?*

## **Great Expectations**

As you can see, we do have great expectations for our members. These are not to intimidate you, but to help you realize just what is expected if you join our church. We expect you to live in holiness, participate in worship, serve, give, and evangelize. These five things are expected of all our members. We have a firm commitment that we can do more together to fulfill the great commission than we can as individuals. When every member is invested in the mission of God, the church will see great fruit result from its ministry. We want you to join us in this sacrificial mission for the glory of God!

# Session 4: How Can I Get Connected to the Church?

Today is the last session of the New Members Class. We've talked a lot about church membership and what is expected of members at Forest Hills Baptist Church. In this session, we want to help connect you into the life of our church, including asking you to join our church. Hopefully over the course of this class, you've been able to hear our churches heart for the Gospel, our love for God, and our desire to reach our community and world for Jesus. Today we are going to give you an overview of the different ministries at FHBC. In addition, we would like to connect you to a Sunday School class, get you involved in serving, and schedule a membership interview with one of our pastors.

## Ministry Overview

### Worship

The most important of all our weekly activities as a church is our Sunday morning worship. This is when the entire church gathers to sing, pray, give, and hear the word of God preached. We design our worship service to connect you to the God who has saved you and redeemed you. The most important aspect of our worship service is the preaching of the Word. We believe that this is important, because the Word of God trains us and equips us for the mission of God (2 Tim 3:16). Our worship pastor and teams seek to gather the people to sing to the Lord the overflow of praise in our hearts. It is also an opportunity for us to give our offering to the Lord out of thanksgiving for all He has done.

### Sunday School

It is important to get connected to community. You may meet a few people in worship on Sunday morning, but to really get connected in making friends and partners for ministry, you need to join a Sunday School class. Our Sunday School classes meet before morning worship and they are a wonderful time of fellowship, community, and Bible teaching. We have a variety of Sunday School classes available for all age groups. You have been provided with a brochure to be able to see all that we have to offer. Before we leave today, we would love to get you signed up for one of those Sunday School classes.

### Wednesday Night Activities

Wednesday nights are busy at Forest Hills. There is something going on for everyone! There are children's choirs, RA and GAs, Youth worship, Bible studies, and Prayer meetings. In addition, choir practice typically happens on Wednesday nights. Child care is provided and we would love to have you get connected in these additional ministries to help you grow in your faith.

## Other Ministries

At Forest Hills, we offer a wide variety of different ministries for people of different age groups and backgrounds. Here is a brief overview of these ministries.

**Children's and Youth Ministry.** Our Children's and Youth activities cover everyone from newborns to high school graduates. In addition to Sunday School classes designed for each of these age groups, there are weekly activities on Wednesday night for the younger generation. Throughout the year there are many special events such as camps, Vacation Bible School, and fellowship events.

**Music Ministry.** We have several different music teams that you can join, which include children's choirs, adult choirs, handbells and praise team. Our Worship Pastor, Grant Stanley, is always looking for musicians who want to use their talents to praise the Lord. If interested in joining any of these teams stop by the welcome center or speak with Pastor Grant at [gstanley@foresthillsbaptist.org](mailto:gstanley@foresthillsbaptist.org).

**WMU.** WMU stands for Women's Missionary Union. The ladies of our church are active in serving our community and being engaged on mission. They offer special events throughout the year to get the women of our church together for community and mission. Contact Julie Matthew or Lynn Anders, our WMU Directors for more information. You can contact Julie at [jmatthews524@yahoo.com](mailto:jmatthews524@yahoo.com)

**Brotherhood.** The Brotherhood is our men's ministry at Forest Hills. The men get together a few times a year for breakfast and service projects. One of the big events they do every year is a men's fishing trip in October. Contact John Sugg, our Brotherhood director for more information at [johnsugg@coastalnet.com](mailto:johnsugg@coastalnet.com)

**Senior Adult Ministry.** The Senior Adults stay active and busy in our church. Our Prime Timers get together monthly on Thursdays for a lunch program. They go on trips and activities together in addition to doing some great ministries like making soup for the hungry of Wilson. In addition they also have the Hearts and Hand Stitchers who make wonderful items for those in need. Contact Barbara Douglas, our Senior Adult Director for more information at 252-291-4396

**Deaf Ministry.** We have a thriving deaf ministry. They meet regularly for worship every Sunday morning and have a variety of Bible studies, Sunday School classes, and fellowship times. If interested in getting connected with our deaf ministry contact our deaf pastor Nathan Carter at [ncarter@foresthillsbaptist.org](mailto:ncarter@foresthillsbaptist.org).

**Discipleship.** Discipleship is key to growing in the Lord. At Forest Hills we have a discipleship team that seeks to provide opportunities for you to grow in the Lord. There are a variety of different Bible studies taking place year around. In addition we have a one-on-one discipleship ministry. If you would like to be connected to a member of our church for personal discipleship stop by the welcome center to sign up. For more questions on discipleship contact Pastor Justin at [jdeeter@foresthillsbaptist.org](mailto:jdeeter@foresthillsbaptist.org).

**Pastoral Care.** As a member, there will be times in your life when you may need a pastor or deacon to minister to you. Every church member is assigned to a particular deacon. If you have any needs or concerns be sure to speak with your deacon. Your deacon will also be there for you if you go into the hospital or are facing an illness of some kind. Our pastors are also available if you need to speak with them. All you have to do is call the church office and Cindy, our secretary, will get you connected to a pastor.

*Discussion Questions: Which of these ministries are you most interested in learning how to getting involved? Who can I connect you with to learn more?*

## **Serving**

There are also a variety of different areas where you can serve at our church! The easiest ways to get started serving at our church is through our Sunday Volunteer Teams. We would love to get you signed up to start serving in one of these teams today. These teams operate on a monthly or bimonthly rotation and is coordinated via email through an online service we use called Planning Center Online. Danny Graham is our Volunteer Coordinator on Sunday morning and would love to get you connected in serving on one of seven ministry teams. You can contact Danny at [graham\\_danny@live.com](mailto:graham_danny@live.com)

### **Greeting Team**

The greeting team exists to show gracious hospitality to our members and our visitors. They are stationed around the church on Sunday morning for the purpose of welcoming and directing people where to go. They are available with a smile on their face to give directions as necessary.

### **Parking Team**

The parking team helps coordinate parking as people arrive. In addition, they assist the elderly out of their cars as well as young families with children. They help guide and direct people, especially visitors, where to park and what entrance into the building they should take.

### **Welcome Center Team**

The welcome center team stations the kiosk by the covered entrance. They are available on Sundays to answer questions, provide information to visitors, and connect you to ministry. They are a friendly face people can go to for one stop information about Forest Hills Baptist.

### **Coffee Team**

Every Sunday we offer coffee available to our congregation in the welcome center. The coffee team coordinates all the supplies and making sure coffee is setup every Sunday. This team encourages people to hang out in the welcome area to mingle and meet new people.

## **Ushers**

The ushers are responsible for passing out bulletins on Sunday, helping people find seating in the sanctuary, and taking up the offering on Sunday.

## **AV Team**

The AV team works in the media booth. On a typical Sunday we have a person running sound, running proresenter (projector), recording video, and running the lights. This team takes special training. If interested in joining this team, or if you are willing to learn contact Grant Stanley, the worship pastor or sign up at the welcome center.

## **Worship Team**

The worship team helps lead our congregation in worship on Sunday morning. We have several instrumentalist and singers. If interested in joining this team contact Grant Stanley with your interest or sign up at the welcome center.

## **Children's and Youth Ministry**

We do always need children and youth volunteers for Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. If you are interested in working with the younger generation we have an application and a background check that must be completed before you can be considered. You can take the application today or pick one up at the welcome center any Sunday morning. You can also turn in your application to the welcome center.

*Discussion Questions: Are there any questions about these teams? For which team will you sign up to serve for?*

## **Getting Connected**

Now is the time of decisions. We want to get you connected to Forest Hills Baptist Church! Here are three things we need from you:

1. What Sunday School class do you want to join?
2. What Volunteer Team do you want to serve?
3. When can you meet with one of our pastors for your membership interview?

We are so excited that you've expressed such interest in joining Forest Hills Baptist Church. When you meet with one of our pastors, be sure to bring your one page written testimony to share with him. We pray that God will lead you here to get connected to our community and get involved in ministry. If there is ever anything our church can do to serve and minister to you, please do not hesitate to let your deacon or a pastor know!

# Appendix

## The Baptist Faith and Message (2000)

### I. The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

### II. God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

#### A. God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

#### B. God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16; Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

### **C. God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

## **III. Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the

goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

## IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace.

Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20; 15:10;*

*2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

## V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

## VI. The Church

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12;*

*Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philipians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

## VII. Baptism and the Lord's Supper

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus. It is a testimony to his faith in the final resurrection of the dead. Being a church ordinance, it is prerequisite to the privileges of church membership and to the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

## VIII. The Lord's Day

The first day of the week is the Lord's Day. It is a Christian institution for regular observance. It commemorates the resurrection of Christ from the dead and should include exercises of worship and spiritual devotion, both public and private. Activities on the Lord's Day should be commensurate with the Christian's conscience under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

*Exodus 20:8-11; Matthew 12:1-12; 28:1ff.; Mark 2:27-28; 16:1-7; Luke 24:1-3,33-36; John 4:21-24; 20:1,19-28; Acts 20:7; Romans 14:5-10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; Colossians 2:16; 3:16; Revelation 1:10.*

## IX. The Kingdom

The Kingdom of God includes both His general sovereignty over the universe and His particular kingship over men who willfully acknowledge Him as King. Particularly the Kingdom is the realm of salvation into which men enter by trustful, childlike commitment to Jesus Christ. Christians ought to pray and to labor that the Kingdom may come and God's will be done on earth. The full consummation of the Kingdom awaits the return of Jesus Christ and the end of this age.

*Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 9:6-7; Jeremiah 23:5-6; Matthew 3:2; 4:8-10,23; 12:25-28; 13:1-52; 25:31-46; 26:29; Mark 1:14-15; 9:1; Luke 4:43; 8:1; 9:2; 12:31-32; 17:20-21; 23:42; John 3:3; 18:36; Acts 1:6-7; 17:22-31; Romans 5:17; 8:19; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 11:10,16; 12:28; 1 Peter 2:4-10; 4:13; Revelation 1:6,9; 5:10; 11:15; 21-22.*

## X. Last Things

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28,35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

## XI. Evangelism and Missions

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ has commanded the preaching of the gospel to all nations. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## XII. Education

Christianity is the faith of enlightenment and intelligence. In Jesus Christ abide all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. All sound learning is, therefore, a part of our Christian heritage. The new birth opens all human faculties and creates a thirst for knowledge. Moreover, the cause of education in the Kingdom of Christ is co-ordinate with the causes of missions and general benevolence, and should receive along with these the liberal support of the churches. An adequate system of Christian education is necessary to a complete spiritual program for Christ's people.

In Christian education there should be a proper balance between academic freedom and academic responsibility. Freedom in any orderly relationship of human life is always limited and never absolute. The freedom of a teacher in a Christian school, col-

lege, or seminary is limited by the pre-eminence of Jesus Christ, by the authoritative nature of the Scriptures, and by the distinct purpose for which the school exists.

*Deuteronomy 4:1,5,9,14; 6:1-10; 31:12-13; Nehemiah 8:1-8; Job 28:28; Psalms 19:7ff.; 119:11; Proverbs 3:13ff.; 4:1-10; 8:1-7,11; 15:14; Ecclesiastes 7:19; Matthew 5:2; 7:24ff.; 28:19-20; Luke 2:40; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Ephesians 4:11-16; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 2:3,8-9; 1 Timothy 1:3-7; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:14-17; Hebrews 5:12-6:3; James 1:5; 3:17.*

### XIII. Stewardship

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and a binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth.

*Genesis 14:20; Leviticus 27:30-32; Deuteronomy 8:18; Malachi 3:8-12; Matthew 6:1-4,19-21; 19:21; 23:23; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21,42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Romans 6:6-22; 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 12:15; Philippians 4:10-19; 1 Peter 1:18-19.*

### XIV. Cooperation

Christ's people should, as occasion requires, organize such associations and conventions as may best secure cooperation for the great objects of the Kingdom of God. Such organizations have no authority over one another or over the churches. They are voluntary and advisory bodies designed to elicit, combine, and direct the energies of our people in the most effective manner. Members of New Testament churches should cooperate with one another in carrying forward the missionary, educational, and benevolent ministries for the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Christian unity in the New Testament sense is spiritual harmony and voluntary cooperation for common ends by various groups of Christ's people. Cooperation is desirable between the various Christian denominations, when the end to be attained is itself justified, and when such cooperation involves no violation of conscience or compromise of loyalty to Christ and His Word as revealed in the New Testament.

*Exodus 17:12; 18:17ff.; Judges 7:21; Ezra 1:3-4; 2:68-69; 5:14-15; Nehemiah 4; 8:1-5; Matthew 10:5-15; 20:1-16; 22:1-10; 28:19-20; Mark 2:3; Luke 10:1ff.; Acts 1:13-14; 2:1ff.; 4:31-37; 13:2-3; 15:1-35; 1 Corinthians 1:10-17; 3:5-15; 12; 2 Corinthians 8-9; Galatians 1:6-10; Ephesians 4:1-16; Philippians 1:15-18.*

### XV. The Christian and the Social Order

All Christians are under obligation to seek to make the will of Christ supreme in our own lives and in human society. Means and methods used for the improvement of society and the establishment of righteousness among men can be truly and permanently helpful only when they are rooted in the regeneration of the individual by the saving grace of God in Jesus Christ. In the spirit of Christ, Christians should oppose racism, every form of greed, selfishness, and vice, and all forms of sexual immorality, including adultery, homosexuality, and pornography. We should work to provide for the orphaned, the needy, the abused, the aged, the helpless, and the sick. We should speak on behalf of the unborn and contend for the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death. Every Christian should seek to bring industry, government, and society as a whole under the sway of the principles of righteousness, truth, and brotherly love. In order to promote these ends Christians should be ready to work with all men of good will in any good cause, always being careful to act in the spirit of love without compromising their loyalty to Christ and His truth.

*Exodus 20:3-17; Leviticus 6:2-5; Deuteronomy 10:12; 27:17; Psalm 101:5; Micah 6:8; Zechariah 8:16; Matthew 5:13-16,43-48; 22:36-40; 25:35; Mark 1:29-34; 2:3ff.; 10:21; Luke 4:18-21; 10:27-37; 20:25; John 15:12; 17:15; Romans 12-14; 1Corinthians 5:9-10; 6:1-7; 7:20-24; 10:23-11:1; Galatians 3:26-28; Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:12-17; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; Philemon; James 1:27; 2:8.*

## XVI. Peace and War

It is the duty of Christians to seek peace with all men on principles of righteousness. In accordance with the spirit and teachings of Christ they should do all in their power to put an end to war.

The true remedy for the war spirit is the gospel of our Lord. The supreme need of the world is the acceptance of His teachings in all the affairs of men and nations, and the practical application of His law of love. Christian people throughout the world should pray for the reign of the Prince of Peace.

*Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 5:9,38-48; 6:33; 26:52; Luke 22:36,38; Romans 12:18-19; 13:1-7; 14:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 4:1-2.*

## XVII. Religious Liberty

God alone is Lord of the conscience, and He has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are contrary to His Word or not contained in it. Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others. Civil government being ordained of God, it is the duty of Christians to render loyal obedience thereto in all things not contrary to the revealed will of God. The church should not resort to the civil power to carry on its work. The gospel of Christ contemplates spiritual means alone for the pursuit of its ends. The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of

any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.

*Genesis 1:27; 2:7; Matthew 6:6-7,24; 16:26; 22:21; John 8:36; Acts 4:19-20; Romans 6:1-2; 13:1-7; Galatians 5:1,13; Philippians 3:20; 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 4:12; 1 Peter 2:12-17; 3:11-17; 4:12-19.*

## XVIII. The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

# Forest Hills Church Covenant

Having been led as we believe by the Spirit of God to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we do now in the presence of God, angels, and this assembly most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit to walk together in Christian love, to strive for the advancement of this church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, doctrines, and discipline; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, and the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and private devotions; to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of our Lord; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances, to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting, and excessive anger, to abstain from the sale of and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; to use our influence to combat the abuse of drugs and the spread of pornography; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we move from this place we will as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

## **The History of Forest Hills Baptist Church**

In March of 1915 the First Baptist Church, along with interested people from the 5 Pts. Area met and organized a Mission Sunday School. The first classes were held on the 29th of March in a leased store building on the corner of Wiggins Mill Road, now known as Downing & Goldsboro Streets. To help you realize this time in history, we were in WW I. The Sunday School soon outgrew this facility. In the meantime a lot 45 x 125' was given to the congregation by Mr. E. J. Barnes. The present church is situated on part of that land. A house of worship, 30 by 50 ft. was erected on this lot at a cost of \$855.13. The minutes read that a check in that amount was delivered to First Baptist Church and a receipt was given in return. The first worship service was held on January 9, 1916 in a building that was debt free. The church organized as the Second Baptist Church of Wilson on February 20, 1916. The local assembly consisted of 16 charter members.

In 1921 the congregation voted to change the name of the church to Five Points Missionary Baptist. A Ladies Aid Society was organized during these years. The church minutes read that these ladies cleaned the church; however, there were no bathrooms or a kitchen to clean, as there was no water in 5 Points. They cleaned the sanctuary and provided and arranged the flowers for worship. Men and women alike made the fires and stoked the stove for meetings. The streets around the church were not paved. The road was a narrow path with ruts in it, made by whatever vehicle happened to use it.

On March 8, 1981 eight acres of land was purchased for the purpose of building a Southern Baptist Church. The "Together We Build" campaign was used to secure commitments to finance this undertaking.

The church family decided to totally relocate to the new facilities on Forest Hills Road and officially changed its name to Forest Hills Baptist Church. Five Points Missionary Baptist church was sold and is now Glory Baptist Church. The end of an era was the moving of the cornerstone from the church on the corner of Sauls and Jordan Street to Forest Hills Baptist Church.

We believe that the best days of Forest Hills Baptist Church are ahead of us, not behind us. We desire to continue to be used by God to reach our community with the good news of Jesus Christ. We are thankful for the faithful saints who came before us, and we strive to continue in the same mission and which spurred the start of our church, the Great Commission.