



Membership Information and Guidelines for the Northwood Family of Churches

The Northwood Family of Churches exists to partner together to reach Charleston and beyond by raising up and reproducing healthy disciples who plant and replant healthy, multiplying churches in the Low Country and to the ends of the earth. The Northwood Family of Churches is a family of interdependent, autonomous churches that cooperate by sharing resources to plant and replant churches.

To ensure alignment of the churches that are joining in this effort, it is essential that each church agree on the foundational elements of what is required to be a church in the Northwood Family of Churches. We believe it is critically important for Northwood Churches to stay vitally connected and accountable to Northwood doctrine, mission, core commitments, ministry philosophy and other Northwood Family Churches.

Vision: To help people connect faith to life through intentional, Gospel-centered discipleship.

Mission: To make disciples who encounter God, experience community, are equipped to make disciples, and engage the world.

Family Church Philosophy

The Northwood Family of Churches is made up of an interdependent family of self-sustaining, self-governing, self-replicating churches that share a common family name (Northwood Baptist Church), common doctrine, common core commitments, common family traits, and common family affiliations.

Family Name

Each member Church will include "Northwood Baptist" in its name. It may informally go by Northwood_____ as well. e.g., Northwood Baptist Berkeley and Northwood Baptist at Wando Woods

Family Doctrine

Each church holds to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

Family Core Commitments

Each Church will uphold these four elements as essential elements of their ministry:

- Encounter God – We live to worship the One who has redeemed us through Jesus.
- Experience Community - We grow best in our faith when we are connected to the body of Christ.

- Equip to Make Disciples – We must train followers of Jesus to obey Jesus and live out the character of Christ.
- Engage the World – We long to see people from every tribe, tongue, and nation redeemed by Jesus.

Family Traits

Each Church is aligned with the characteristics and beliefs of the Northwood Family of Churches:

1. Shepherd Leadership

We believe that the biblical pattern and model for pastoral leadership in the church is not that of CEO but of shepherd. Pastors in the Northwood Family of Churches are committed to caring for their church as they lead their church, faithfully teach their church, and protect their church from false teaching. Pastors in the Northwood Family of Churches are committed shepherding their flock well. Because it takes much time to bring revitalization and transformation to individuals, families, churches, and communities, Northwood pastors and our congregation are committed to each other for the long haul.

2. God-centered Worship

Our desire is to become a church where every believer experiences the sovereign grace of the Father, wholeheartedly treasures Jesus, and freely expresses adoration of God individually and corporately through the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. In our weekly services, we preach sermons from the Bible, sing contemporary songs and hymns, and celebrate baptism and Lord's Supper often.

3. Text-driven, Christ-centered Preaching

Most often, we preach systematically through books of the Bible showing how every page of Scripture points to Jesus. We believe God's Word alone is what convicts, converts, builds up, and sanctifies God's people (Heb. 4:12; 1 Pet. 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:13; Jn. 17:17). Preaching that makes the main point of the text the main point of the sermon makes God's agenda, and not the preacher's, rule the church.

4. Healthy Families

God has designed the family as the foundation of society and as the primary mechanism to embody and advance His gospel in the world. Therefore, we are committed to encouraging and equipping families to more fully love and honor God, more faithfully love and serve one another, and more intentionally pursue God's mission in their neighborhood, city, and world. We are committed to helping husbands grow as spiritual leaders in their homes, and we are committed to helping fathers and mothers learn how to disciple their children.

5. Joyous Community

It is a joy to be with the people of God. Biblical fellowship happens when the people of God gather around the Word of God and determine to live out the “one another’s” of Scripture. The Gospel compels us to love one another because God, who first loved us in Jesus Christ, has given us the ability to love our neighbors as ourselves. Therefore, we are committed to becoming a community marked by Christ-like love and service to one another.

6. Strategic Disciple-making

Each Northwood Church is committed to making disciples through an intentional, reproducible strategy so that every church member has the opportunity to be discipled and equipped to make disciples.

7. Missional Living

Each Northwood Church is made up of people of all ages who Jesus desires to send out to be missionaries in the world. We want our church members to be on mission where they live, work, and play. Missions is not a program of the church. Rather, missions is the reason why God has left the church on the earth.

8. Diverse Community

At both the leadership level and within the congregation, Northwood seeks to reflect the makeup of the surrounding community ethnically, economically, and intergenerationally.

Family Affiliations

1. Northwood Family of Churches: All Northwood Churches are a part of the Northwood Family of Churches.
2. Southern Baptist Convention: Northwood churches are a part of the SBC (Southern Baptist Convention), state SBC conventions, and local SBC associations.

Northwood Family of Churches Operation and Membership

All our Northwood churches exist to glorify God by making joyful, passionate disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19-20). In seeking to effectively carry out this mission, we recognize the need to plant and replant churches across the Low Country. We believe every community needs a healthy church.

The interdependent relationship of churches in the Northwood Family of Churches finds its primary expression through the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team. The Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team is comprised of the lead pastor and one other pastor from each Northwood family church. The Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team will meet regularly to provide a forum for ongoing accountability, encouragement, and support. These meetings will also be a time for prayer and strategic planning for the family of churches. The Leadership Team facilitates church planting,

replanting, adoptions, and the relationships of the Northwood Family of Churches so they may more effectively advance the mission of God in the Low Country. How churches join the Northwood Family of Churches:

Church Plants

Northwood Family Churches are active in planting churches and these plants are initiated by the pastors of a sending Northwood Family Church and established with the intention of becoming self-sustaining in time.

Church Replants

These are opportunities in which a church understands that they have declined to the point that they will have to soon close their doors. They are open to a complete reworking of ministry philosophy adopting the guidelines for becoming a Northwood Family Church.

Church Adoptions

These are opportunities in which an existing church wants to become part of the Northwood Family of Churches. This may be initiated by churches of varying levels of health and size that want to partner with the Northwood Family of Churches for support, encouragement and partnership. Churches that adopt into the Northwood Family of Churches will vote to align with the Northwood Family of Churches and adopt the church bylaws for a Northwood Church.

Northwood Family Church plants, replants, and adoptions will progressively move towards maturity by becoming self-governing, self-sustaining, and self-replicating.

1. Self-Governing

Each Northwood Family Church will launch with a plurality of pastors and will move towards adding new pastors (paid or unpaid) as the need for more pastors becomes evident. These local pastors will be responsible for feeding, leading, knowing, and protecting the flock. Each Northwood Family Church will also move towards becoming a self-governing membership body, which will affirm pastoral guidance through member-populated committees such as personnel, finance, buildings and grounds, etc. along with member voting on governance, church budget, new members, excommunicating/releasing members, hiring of ministry directors, and the appointment of pastors.

Self-Governing Markers

- Installation of Pastors and Deacons
- Regular Members meetings (Business and Annual)
- Finance and Personnel Committees
- Adoption and incorporation of Northwood Family Church By-Laws

2. Self-Sustaining

Each Northwood Family Church will move towards decreasing financial support from its sending church, other Northwood Family Churches, and outside support/partnership sources, with a goal of becoming financially self-sustaining by year five.

Self-Sustaining Markers

- Supported by congregational giving
- Independent budgeting, bank accounts, and church giving to denomination/networks
- No longer reliant on external funding

3. Self-Replicating

The Northwood Family of Churches is committed to multiplying (through planting, replanting, and adopting) churches that plant churches. Therefore, by God's grace, each Northwood Family Church that is launched will seek to plant or replant a church within five years of being planted or replanted. When the opportunity arises for multiple Northwood Family Churches to send leaders and people to launch a new Northwood Church, the churches will work together under the leadership of their pastors, the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team, and the Lead Planting Pastor to identify, equip, and send a Launch Team/Core Group to launch the new Northwood Church.

Self-Replicating Marker

- Church has the resources and people needed to become a sending church

Membership

Churches that fit the profiles above may be invited for membership in the Northwood Family of Churches.

Membership Requirements

To maintain membership in the Northwood Family of Churches, each individual Church must agree to the following:

Annual Reporting and Membership Renewal

Each Church must annually present reports as established by the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team (e.g., membership, financials, etc.). Further, the Membership Covenant attached to this document, will be renewed annually.

Constitution and/or Bylaws

Each Church must maintain in its office a printed copy of the current text of its Constitution and/or Bylaws together with a copy of other relevant governing documents of the Church. These will be kept in a corporation minute book.

Government

Each church shall function as a Jesus-led, pastor-guided, and congregationally affirmed church. Each church is subject to the control of no denominational body, but each church should voluntarily recognize and sustain cooperation with the local SBC association, the state SBC convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention.

Financial Records

Each church must permit members of the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team to visit and allow it to examine its books, minutes, records and affairs, to determine whether it conforms, and continues to conform, to the provisions of this document, and whether its standards warrant continued recognition as a member of the Northwood Family of Churches. If in the opinion of the Northwood Family of Churches, the church fails to meet such requirements, the Northwood Family of Churches may take action that, in its discretion, it deems appropriate, either to correct undesirable conditions or to end that church's status as a member of the Northwood Family of Churches.

Branding and Media Guidelines

Each church will agree to the Branding and Media Guidelines as a member of the Northwood Family of Churches.

Policies

Each church must maintain, and remain in compliance with, a set of ministry policies to be provided to the Northwood Family of Churches as requested. If needed, a suggested set of policies can be provided by the Northwood Family of Churches and amended by the church to use in their context.

Sustainability

If a Northwood Family Church experiences a decline in average Sunday attendance to an average below forty (40) adults over a six-month period, or is unable to substantially perform its fiscal responsibilities over the course of one (1) year, including, but not limited to: (a) the ability to pay compensation to its pastors; or (b) the ability to pay the mortgage, the rent, or any outstanding debts, then the Northwood Family of Churches may place the Church in "Imperiled Status." When a Church is placed in Imperiled Status, the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team must undertake an assessment process to discern an appropriate course of action, including, but not limited to: (v) intentional redevelopment; (x) relocation; (y) merging or partnering with another Northwood Family Church; or (z) recommending closing. The Northwood Family Church may identify a pastor from the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team to work with the Church during the assessment process and may take whatever actions the Northwood Family of Churches deems reasonably appropriate in response to such an assessment. The Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team may, when agreed upon conditions are met, remove the Church from Imperiled Status.

Giving

All Northwood Family Churches will give a minimum amount as agreed upon by the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team of their general tithes and offerings to help further the mission and vision of the Northwood Family of Churches. These monies will be specifically directed towards efforts surrounding the planting, replanting, and adoption of new Northwood Family Churches and will be directed by the Leadership Team.

Termination

If a Northwood Family Church fails to comply with the guidelines provided in this document, then the church may lose membership in the Northwood Family of Churches and its accompanying rights and privileges. Upon dissolution, the Northwood Family Church agrees that it will relinquish any claim to being a "Northwood Family Church" and any association whatsoever with the name "Northwood" including the use of the Northwood Family Church marks. Northwood Baptist Church owns the logo and licenses it to Northwood Family Churches, which license may be revoked by Northwood Baptist Church at any time.

Northwood Family of Churches Application Process

Submission of Application

After being invited by the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team, every Church or congregation desiring admission as a church of the Northwood Family of Churches must include a written letter to the Northwood Family of Churches along with a copy of a resolution passed by that church's pastors and affirmed by their congregation.

Content of Resolution

Each resolution must provide that the applying Church agrees to abide by, conform to, and observe the Bylaws of the Northwood Family of Churches and all rules, orders, and regulations of the Northwood Family of Churches as stated in this document. Additionally, the resolution must authorize the application to the Northwood Family of Churches, authorize that church's participation, and provide that the lead pastor and one additional pastor will actively participate on the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team (see attached example of resolution).

Each resolution must also otherwise be:

- duly certified by the presiding officer and clerk or secretary of the church at which the resolution was adopted;
- authenticated by the seal of the church or if there is no such seal, the clerk or the secretary must so state.

Documents Accompanying Application

The application for admission must be accompanied by:

- a duly certified copy of the Articles of Incorporation of the Church;
- a copy of the Church's current by-laws;
- financial records (e.g., P&L statements, Balance Sheets, etc.) including satisfactory evidence that the Church has the financial ability to pay for and continue the support of a Pastor;
- a copy of Church's statement of faith;
- a copy of all doctrinal statements on the following issues:
 - sexuality
 - women preaching/teaching
 - marriage and divorce
 - role of elders/deacons
 - use of alcohol and other controlled substance
 - role of men and women in marriage, church and in the home;
- a copy of the Church's membership application and covenant for its people; and
- satisfactory evidence that not less than 25 persons who are members of the Church have for at least 6 months preceding the application, regularly worshiped in the Church.

Governance

Any changes in the Bylaws by any Church must be shared with the Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team prior to taking a congregational vote.

Waiver of Requirements for Churches

The Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team may waive any or all of the requirements in this document for any church as so voted by a simple majority vote.

Membership Covenant

The Northwood Family of Churches is hereby establishing a covenant with our church to support, encourage, and equip in the mission of making fully surrendered disciples of Jesus and to plant and replant churches. The Northwood Family of Churches commits to provide spiritual and administrative support, as deemed appropriate, to our church by serving as an organization that supports, upholds, and encourages the distinctives of what it means to be a Northwood Family Church.

Our church is hereby establishing a covenant with the Northwood Family of Churches in order to plant and replant churches in the mission of making fully surrendered disciples of Jesus. As a Northwood Family Church, the members and pastors of our church are committed to everything as stated in this document.

Our lead pastor and one other designated pastor commit to attend every Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team meeting (except in case of emergency, vacation, etc.), to engage thoughtfully and prayerfully in Leadership Team discussions, to submit to decisions of the Leadership Team without reservations or conditions, and to resolve differences in humility among ourselves and in regard to the Northwood Family of Churches.

We commit to giving _____ to the Northwood Family of Churches over the next calendar year.

By signing below, you are entering into a covenant relationship with the Northwood Family of Churches and affirm the following: 1) you have read and will commit to uphold and abide by the guidelines established in this document in its entirety without exception and any amendments thereto, 2) you have been given permission by your governing body and with knowledge and approval by your congregation in a business meeting to sign and accept these terms and conditions as set forth in this Membership Covenant and Membership Packet for the Northwood Family of Churches.

Signature of Church Pastors _____

_____ Date _____

Printed Names _____

Church Name _____ Date _____

Signature of Northwood Family of Churches Leadership Team Representative

_____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

RESOLUTION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN Northwood FAMILY OF CHURCHES

WHEREAS, Northwood Baptist at Wando Woods (the "Church") desires to apply to and become a member of the Northwood Family of Churches;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Church approves application of the Church into the Northwood Family of Churches.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that, in order to obtain membership, the Church hereby approves the application for membership to the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES, the Membership Covenant Agreement, and any other documents required by the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES for membership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that upon acceptance into the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES, the Church agrees to actively participate in the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES and abide by, conform to, and observe the Bylaws of the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES, the Membership Information and Guidelines for the Northwood Family of Churches, the Covenant Membership Agreement, and all rules, orders, and regulations established by the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES now and in the future.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the lead pastor of the Church, shall serve on the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES Leadership Team and regularly attend and participate in the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES Leadership Team meetings.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Lead Pastor the Church is hereby authorized to execute and deliver any of the documents necessary to accomplish the application for membership into the NORTHWOOD FAMILY OF CHURCHES.

The undersigned hereby certifies that he or she is the duly elected and qualified [Title of Officer] of the Church, duly formed pursuant to the laws of the State of South Carolina, and that the foregoing is a true record of a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the members and that said meeting was held in accordance with South Carolina law and the Bylaws of the Church, and that said resolution is now in full force and effect without modification or rescission.

Dated as of this _____ day of _____, 20_____.

[Name of Church],
a South Carolina nonprofit corporation

By: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: [Title of Officer] _____

[SEAL OF CHURCH]