

Partnership Agreement and Long Term Vision

Section 1: Partnership Agreement

Bishop Branch Baptist Church & Lebanon Baptist Church

We, the members of Bishop Branch Baptist Church (B3) and Lebanon Baptist Church (LBC), enter into this partnership having discerned the leading of the Holy Spirit and with a mutual desire to strengthen and support LBC in faithfully and effectively carrying out its God-given mission and vision. “Partnership” is a model of church revitalization whereby one church (B3) sends an Associate pastor and a team of members to another church (LBC) to unite with that congregation as fellow members and labor alongside them in pursuing the change and transformation necessary to faithfully and effectively carry out LBC’s God-given mission and vision within the community. Moving from a season of decline to a season of growth will require thoughtful changes in ministry methodology and strategy as we seek to reach our community more effectively. While the idea of change can be unsettling, any transformation, development, or adjustment to our ministry methods and strategies will be made prayerfully, in submission to the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and with the invited participation of the congregation. Lebanon Baptist Church is committed to navigating this season of growth in a spirit of unity, humility, and shared purpose.

At the same time, our message will never change. The person and work of Jesus Christ—His life, crucifixion, death, resurrection, and the gospel He proclaimed—will remain the unchanging center of everything we do.

This partnership will become effective on August 16th, 2026, and the direct partnership relationship between these two churches will last 2 years. During this time, B3 and Lebanon commit to the following.

B3 commits to:

- 1) Send a team of members to LBC to unite with that congregation as members and send an Associate pastor (Nathan Foxx) to serve alongside Barry as a member of LBC’s pastoral team. Those who become members of LBC through the partnership with B3 will remain members throughout the duration of the partnership and thereafter, for as long as the Holy Spirit leads them to continue serving and ministering at LBC. Those who remain at B3 will continue to pray for, encourage, and support LBC in whatever ways the Holy Spirit may lead.
- 2) Receive no money, land, property, assets, ownership interest, compensation, reimbursement, or other material consideration of any kind from LBC and will have no claim or interest in any assets of LBC.
- 3) Provide financial support for the salary of Nathan Foxx in the amount of \$34,000 during the first year of the partnership (August 2026-August 2027) and \$17,000 during the second year (August 2027-August 2028). LBC and its leaders will determine, at their own discretion, when and to what extent Nathan will be compensated as circumstances develop in the years ahead. B3’s commitment is limited to the salary assistance outlined above, intended to help establish and support LBC’s growing pastoral team during its formative years.
- 4) Work alongside LBC throughout the partnership period in pursuing the shared commitments and vision of the partnership and to participate in evaluating the health, growth, and progress of the partnership through meetings held every six months (or more frequently at the request of either church) between B3’s elders and LBC’s pastors and deacons.

- 5) Provide spiritual support via B3's elders to LBC's pastoral team through prayer, encouragement, and personal accountability in their walk with Christ.

LBC commits to:

- 1) Holy Spirit guided change as He leads LBC church towards growth and transformation.
- 2) Entrust its pastoral team with the responsibility to evaluate and lead growth, change, and spiritual development in all ministry, administrative, organizational, and operational areas, and will commit to embracing and implementing the changes necessary to faithfully and effectively fulfill its vision, mission, message, and ministry strategy.
- 3) Begin the process of revising its Constitution and Bylaws during the first year of the partnership period and to complete those revisions no later than the second year of the partnership period. These revisions shall align with biblical structure, LBC's updated vision, mission, message, and ministry strategy, and ensure compliance with new legal requirements and new case law developments so as to preserve the church's religious liberty protections, maintain its nonprofit standing, and avoid unnecessary legal liabilities.
- 4) Continue assuming full financial responsibility for the ministry and operations of its own church body, apart from the salary assistance provided to Nathan during the partnership period. As B3's salary assistance gradually decreases, LBC will bear responsibility for providing Nathan's compensation should the church desire to continue his service as part of the pastoral team at LBC.
- 5) Work alongside B3 throughout the partnership period in pursuing the shared commitments and vision of the partnership and to participate in evaluating the health, growth, and progress of the partnership through meetings held every six months (or more frequently at the request of either church) between B3's elders and LBC's pastors and deacons.

The purpose of periodic evaluation meetings is to celebrate progress, assess and discuss ministry strategies, consider any necessary adjustments, cultivate unity among the leaders of our sister churches, and pray together for all that lies ahead. Any alterations to the partnership agreement will require approval from B3's elders and LBC's pastors and through procedural steps appropriate to each church's bylaws and policies.

If the leaders at either church determine through prayerful, biblical evaluation that continuing the partnership is not in the best interest of God's kingdom, this partnership agreement can be terminated through procedural steps appropriate to each church's bylaws and policies. Such a termination will be communicated to both congregations in a timely and appropriate manner.

Together we at LBC and B3 agree to the following:

- 1) **Autonomy:** LBC and B3 will remain independent and autonomous congregations. B3 neither possesses nor will possess decision-making authority over LBC. At the same time, autonomy should not be understood as ultimate control by church members, for Christ rules His church through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, each congregation should seek to remain submitted to the Spirit's leading and to grow into a biblically healthy church that faithfully reaches its community with the gospel for the glory of God. B3 is sending some of its strongest and most faithful members and expending tens of thousands of dollars throughout the partnership period with the prayerful expectation that LBC will continue to grow in obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit in the years to come.
- 2) **Commitments:** Keeping the commitments outlined above to the best of their abilities.

- 3) **Celebration:** God has already done much that is worthy of celebration in the months leading up to this partnership. Accordingly, this agreement begins from a posture of gratitude, celebration, and eager anticipation for all that God will continue to do.
- 4) **Change and Transformation:** Each church has a unique DNA, expressing healthy church functions in ways that fit its context. As communities change, ministry methods must adapt. This partnership includes LBC embracing a new long-term vision, which provides goals and benchmarks to guide growth in a biblical direction. Though change can be challenging, LBC's leaders commit to leading it prayerfully and communicating clearly. Likewise, B3 must continue to change, grow, and adapt to fulfill its mission and reach its community under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
- 5) **Leadership:** For the sake of clarity regarding Nathan's role, his responsibilities are set forth in Document 3, "Associate Pastor Job Description." Prior to the vote, Nathan will submit a résumé, participate in an interview, and complete any additional steps required by LBC's Personnel Committee in accordance with LBC's bylaws. These measures are intended to ensure maximum transparency, clarity, and accountability throughout the process. (LBC's Constitution- Section 3. C) (Also see Appendix A)
- 6) **Decision:** On August 9, each church will decide whether to formally enter into this church partnership, and this decision will be procedurally made in compliance with each church's bylaws. The following items constitute the proposal that each church will be asked to affirm or reject.

B3 will decide on the following:

1. The sending of the church multiplication team to LBC. An affirmative decision authorizes the sending of the church multiplication team and recognizes that the members of that team will conclude their membership at B3 and immediately commence membership at LBC.
2. The commitments outlined in this partnership agreement. An affirmative decision signifies B3's commitment to fulfill, to the best of its ability, each responsibility assigned to B3 in this agreement.
3. B3's ongoing mission and vision. An affirmative decision reaffirms B3's commitment to continue growing in the Lord and to continue pursuing its vision of being a healthy church that makes disciples and multiplies churches in the future.

LBC will vote on the following:

1. The reception of the B3 church multiplication team into membership at LBC. An affirmative vote authorizes the reception of all individuals comprising B3's multiplication team as members of LBC. Upon reception, their membership at B3 will cease and their membership at LBC will commence immediately.
2. The calling of Nathan as Associate Pastor of LBC. An affirmative vote calls Nathan to serve as Associate Pastor of LBC under the responsibilities set forth in Section 3 A. and according to the compensation provisions outlined in this partnership agreement. A vote to approve the Partnership will be a concurrent vote to receive Nathan Foxx as Associate pastor as stipulated in the Constitution of LBC, 2. Church Officers, Section 2 Church Staff. (Section 3. C.) (Also see Appendix A)
3. The adoption and support of LBC's long-term vision. An affirmative vote signifies LBC's acceptance, affirmation, and celebration of the long-term vision outlined in Section 2 and commits the congregation to support and participate in the pursuit of that vision.

Section 2: Long Term Vision

Section 1: History

Lebanon Baptist Church (LBC) has a long history of ministry within its community. Throughout that history, the church has experienced seasons of growth and biblical health as well as seasons of decline. During the 2025–2026 ministry year, LBC found itself in a period of decline. Through the Lord's providential orchestration of events, God called a pastor and a team of members from Bishop Branch Baptist Church (B3) to unite with LBC and labor together toward renewed health and growth. Central to this process is the adoption of a clear, Spirit-led long-term vision that will help guide LBC in the direction of growth and biblical health for years to come. The following document outlines that long-term vision.

Section Two: Guiding Statements and Biblical Basis

1. Vision: What is our end goal as a church?

- Lebanon's vision is to be a biblically healthy, multiplying church that participates in Christ's gathering of the nations around His throne in eternal worship. (Acts 1:8, Revelation 7:9-12)
- A biblically healthy church is one that reflects the priorities, practices, and affections of the early church as it lived in faithful obedience to Jesus. The Seven Functions of a Healthy Church (see Appendix A), drawn from Acts 1–2, provide a biblical framework for evaluating the health of a local church. As the New Testament unfolds, another defining characteristic of healthy churches becomes evident: they multiply. The early church did not remain in Jerusalem after the coming of the Holy Spirit. Empowered by the Spirit, believers carried the gospel outward, planting new churches throughout the known world while also strengthening and restoring struggling churches through leaders such as Paul and his ministry companions. Lebanon Baptist Church seeks to follow this same biblical pattern. Just as it is natural for a healthy marriage to bear fruit and multiply, it is natural for a healthy church to do the same. As God continues to grow LBC in biblical health, the church will intentionally pursue opportunities to multiply through church planting, church revitalization, and the calling, equipping, and sending of leaders to communities and churches where they are needed.

2. Mission: What are we called to do now to reach our end goal?

- Lebanon's mission is to seek the glory of God and the centrality of the gospel in all things. (1 Corinthians 10:31 and John 3:16)
- A healthy, multiplying church is built upon members who are wholly devoted to the glory of God and the centrality of the gospel in every area of life. Believers must never view the church as merely a social gathering or Christianity as something practiced only on Sunday mornings. Instead, they are called to submit every area of life to the lordship of Jesus Christ. The Christian life is not about balancing religious obligations alongside everything else. Rather, every thought, word, and action should be lived for the glory of God. Believers should continually ask themselves, *"Is what I am thinking, saying, or doing the most God-glorifying thing I could be thinking, saying, or doing in this moment?"* In the same way, Lebanon Baptist Church must continually ask, *"Does this decision most glorify God and keep the gospel central?"* If the answer is no, then LBC must be willing to adapt its methods—even when doing so requires changing long-held traditions. While the message of the gospel never changes, our methods must always serve that message rather than compete with it.

3. Message: What message are we hoping to get across?

- Lebanon's message is the message of the gospel: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)
- The gospel should be faithfully proclaimed every Sunday, with people consistently given the opportunity to respond in repentance and faith. The church must never grow weary of proclaiming "Christ and Him crucified." We must keep the main thing the main thing, ensuring that the glory of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ remain at the center of everything we are and everything we do.

4. Strategy: How will we function?

- Lebanon's strategy is to glorify God by being a biblically healthy church that lives out the Seven Functions of a Health Church—prayer, worship, leadership, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and evangelism—observable in Acts 1-2. (Acts 1-2)
- See section 3 Document B for information on the Seven Functions of a Healthy Church

Section Three: Benchmarks

These benchmarks are not intended to function as inflexible checklists but as prayerful ministry priorities that help Lebanon Baptist Church pursue long-term biblical health. As the Lord leads, individual priorities and timelines may be adjusted while remaining faithful to the overall vision. Ultimately, no vision, strategy, benchmark, or organizational change can produce genuine spiritual life. This vision must be pursued in humble dependence upon the Holy Spirit, recognizing that only God grants lasting fruit and lasting growth.

Year 1 Benchmarks

1. Worship

- Evaluate the overall worship gathering to ensure every element supports the church's vision, mission, and message. Adjust and develop the various elements of the worship service as needed,
- Strengthen congregational participation in worship and prayer.
- Continue singing the rich hymns that have long been part of Lebanon Baptist Church's worship while also introducing biblically faithful contemporary songs that help reach and engage younger generations. Rather than choosing one style over the other, seek to use both to glorify God and unite the church in worship.

2. Discipleship

- Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of every ministry according to the Seven Functions of a Healthy Church.
- Create a clearly defined discipleship pathway for every age.
- Develop healthy children's and youth ministries with leadership teams, curriculum, and prepared ministry spaces.
- Equip members to grow in biblical maturity.

3. Fellowship

- Intentionally integrate the Bishop Branch multiplication team into the covenant membership and life of Lebanon.
- Strengthen relationships among members through intentional connection and care.

- Develop a clear, written membership and onboarding process for new members.

4. Ministry

- Call, equip, and empower every member to serve according to his or her gifts.
- Develop leadership structures for every ministry.
- Recruit and train additional ministry leaders and volunteers.
- Help ensure that our leaders and volunteers are being disciplined and spiritually encouraged through participation in corporate worship, small groups, and the life of the church.
- Improve ministry systems, organization, safety, and facilities.

5. Evangelism

- Launch an invitation card initiative and equip the congregation to intentionally invite people to church and faithfully share the gospel, praying that many would come to saving faith in Christ.
- Develop guest engagement systems from first visit through membership.
- Lead intentional outreach into schools, neighborhoods, and the surrounding community.
- Equip members to faithfully share the gospel in their everyday lives.

6. Prayer

- Strengthen the church's culture of corporate and personal prayer.
- Grow and develop LBC's Wednesday night prayer meeting, encouraging every member to be part of it.
- Bathe every single decision (big or small) in prayer as pastors, as leaders, and as a congregation. Never make a decision in a business meeting or prayer meeting without first praying.
- Encourage prayer throughout every ministry and leadership gathering.

7. Leadership

- Revise the Constitution and Bylaws to reflect the updated vision and to address current legal and organizational needs.
- The pastors and church leaders will regularly evaluate the health and effectiveness of Lebanon Baptist Church's ministries, leadership, systems, and overall progress toward fulfilling its vision, mission, message, ministry strategy, and the Seven Functions of a Healthy Church. As strengths and areas for improvement are identified, the leaders will prayerfully implement changes that better position the church to glorify God and make disciples.
- Align facilities, finances, and organizational systems with the church's long-term vision.
- Develop sustainable systems that prepare the church for future growth.

Years 2-5 Benchmarks

Building upon the foundation established during Year One, Lebanon Baptist Church will continue strengthening each of the Seven Functions of a Healthy Church. During this phase, the church will celebrate God's faithfulness, evaluate its progress, and expand the ministries, leaders, and systems established during the first year.

1. Worship

- Continue developing a worship ministry that reflects both Lebanon's heritage and its desire to reach future generations.
- Raise up additional musicians, vocalists, and worship leaders to support and strengthen the worship ministry.

2. Discipleship

- Expand discipleship opportunities for every stage of life, ensuring every member has a clear pathway toward spiritual maturity.
- Develop additional Bible studies, small groups, and discipleship environments as the congregation grows.

3. Fellowship

- Continue strengthening biblical community by connecting members across generations and helping every member become meaningfully involved in the life of the church.
- Establish regular fellowship events and intentional connection opportunities that strengthen relationships across the church family and help ensure every member remains known, cared for, and connected as Lebanon grows.

4. Ministry

- Establish sustainable men's, women's, and young adult ministries.
- Develop a structured onboarding and continuing education process for new pastors, deacons, teachers, ministry leaders, and volunteers.
- Continue identifying, mentoring, and deploying new ministry leaders as God raises them up.

5. Evangelism

- Establish consistent local and domestic mission partnerships with regular opportunities for congregational involvement.
- Expand community outreach efforts and encourage every ministry to intentionally engage those outside the church.
- Develop a culture in which evangelism becomes a normal part of everyday Christian living.

6. Prayer

- Develop a mature culture of prayer in which prayer naturally permeates every ministry, leadership meeting, outreach effort, and major decision of the church.
- Encourage families and small groups to become increasingly devoted to praying together.

7. Leadership

- Complete the comprehensive revision of the Constitution and Bylaws to reflect the church's theology, vision, leadership structure, and ministry philosophy.

- Continue transitioning to operation under the leadership of a biblically qualified pastoral team (referred to as a plurality of elders or elder council), with pastors jointly sharing responsibility for shepherding, oversight, and doctrinal faithfulness.
- Continue identifying, equipping, and appointing biblically qualified leaders—including pastors, deacons, and ministry leaders—as the Lord provides. Evaluate needs for hiring additional pastors/ministers such as children’s, youth, family, teaching, or other pastors/ministers.
- Strengthen long-term financial planning, organizational systems, and facilities to support continued ministry growth and prepare the church for future generations.

5–9 Year Benchmarks

Having established healthy ministries, leadership structures, and organizational systems during the previous phases, Lebanon Baptist Church will continue strengthening each of the Seven Functions of a Healthy Church while expanding its gospel influence through leadership development, missions, and multiplication.

1. Worship

- Continue cultivating Christ-centered, Scripture-saturated worship that faithfully proclaims the gospel and serves believers of every generation.

2. Discipleship

- Continue strengthening the church’s discipleship pathway so that every believer is growing in spiritual maturity and helping make disciples of others.

3. Fellowship

- Continue cultivating a church family where members are known, loved, cared for, and meaningfully connected as the congregation grows.

4. Ministry

- Continue developing and multiplying healthy ministry leaders throughout every area of church life.
- Begin intentionally identifying men who may be called into pastoral ministry and equip, affirm, and send them into gospel ministry as the Lord leads.
- Encourage every ministry leader to actively mentor and prepare future leaders who can faithfully carry on and expand the work.

5. Evangelism

- Establish and sustain international mission partnerships while creating opportunities to send members on short-term and long-term mission efforts.
- Begin intentionally preparing Lebanon Baptist Church for future multiplication by teaching biblical models such as church planting, church revitalization, church partnerships, fostering, and adoption.
- Prayerfully identify, equip, and prepare members whom God may call to participate in future multiplication efforts.

6. Prayer

- Continue fostering a culture in which prayer remains central to every ministry, every leader, and every major decision of the church.

7. Leadership

- Continue evaluating and strengthening the health of the church according to the Seven Functions of a Healthy Church.
- Continue refining leadership structures, ministry systems, and organizational practices to support long-term health, faithfulness, and future multiplication.

Long Term Benchmarks

As Lebanon Baptist Church continues strengthening the Seven Functions of a Healthy Church for years to come, the church should seek not merely to maintain health, but to multiply its gospel impact. The long-term vision is for Lebanon to become a mature, sending church that consistently develops disciples, equips leaders, strengthens families, serves its community, and advances the gospel through church multiplication and global missions.

- **Church Multiplication:** Actively pursue church multiplication efforts both locally and beyond. As God provides opportunities, uplift, plant, revitalize, foster, or partner with churches to expand the Kingdom.
- **Leadership Pipeline and Succession:** Develop a robust leadership pipeline that continually identifies, disciples, trains, affirms, and sends future leaders while ensuring healthy pastoral and ministry succession for generations to come.
- **Sending Culture:** Cultivate a church identity marked by joyful sending—regularly commissioning pastors, missionaries, church planters, revitalization teams, and ministry leaders while releasing members to serve Christ wherever He calls.
- **Global Missions:** Establish long-term international mission partnerships that provide ongoing opportunities for members to pray, give, go, and support the spread of the gospel among the nations.
- **Kingdom Influence:** Become a trusted church that encourages, strengthens, and partners with other churches, pastors, and ministries for the advancement of the gospel throughout the region and beyond.
- **Generational Faithfulness:** Leave a lasting spiritual legacy by faithfully passing biblical truth, healthy leadership, and a gospel-centered mission to future generations so that Lebanon Baptist Church continues to flourish long after the current generation of leaders has finished its work.

We recognize that only Christ builds His church. Our confidence is not in programs, personalities, or plans, but in Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. These documents represent our prayerful attempt to steward faithfully the season God has entrusted to us. We submit these plans to the Lord, asking Him to refine them according to His will and use them for His glory among the nations.