

# **FOUR OAKS BAPTIST CHURCH**

## **WORSHIP POLICY**

**September 2026**

## **Worship at Four Oaks Baptist Church**

### **CORE PRINCIPLES**

1. Worship is to facilitate/encourage/enable the congregation to encounter God, and worship Him:  
  
By
  - Prayerful preparation
  - Sensitive, responsive leading
  - Righteous living from all involved in leading
  - Offering room for response
  - Focusing on God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
  - The encouragement of spiritual gifts
2. Worship is to be a reflection of our weekly living, a lifestyle of love for God, reflected corporately together on a Sunday:  
  
By
  - Teaching
  - A rejection of the temptation to apply techniques, or blame the leaders of the worship
3. Worship is to be accessible to non-Christians or those new to following Jesus:  
  
By
  - Eliminating obscure jargon in songs and speech
  - Explaining what is happening
  - Giving freedom for people to participate or not
  - The weighing and supervision of the use of spiritual gifts (see over)
4. Worship is to be inclusive for all, from the joyful to the broken-hearted:  
  
By
  - Offering variety
  - Encouraging honesty
  - Encouraging testimony
  - Encouraging response
5. Worship is to be alive and not predictable:  
  
By
  - Mixing stillness and exuberance
  - Using songs in creative ways; varying instruments, arrangements, pace and repeating verses or chorus.
  - Liturgy and open worship
  - Old and new songs
  - Being prepared to do new things
  - Developing new gifts

6. Worship as a part of the service is to relate to the whole act – it is to correspond to the sermon either as preparation for the Word of God or as response to it:

- By
- Close communication between the service leader and the preacher.
  - Attention to the lyrical content of song

## **CORE PRACTICES**

1. Phil and Lauren are responsible for the services of the Church under the supervision of the leadership eldership teams, working alongside Nicci as the worship coordinator. This means:
  - They have overall responsibility for all that happens in a service. A service leader will be designated for every service and be near or accessible to the worship team.
  - Setting the overall direction and vision for worship, seeking the input of the worship leaders.
  - Appointing, overseeing, training and appraising service/worship leaders.
  - Approving the theological and lyrical content of songs.
  - Approving prospective music group members.
  - Leading or providing training and team meetings.
2. **The Worship Leader** will: (having liaised with the speaker), is responsible for choosing the songs, the order, the length of worship, and any changes to the plan. This means:
  - Before scheduling themselves to lead worship at a 11am service, ensuring that they can make the Thursday evening rehearsal prior to the Sunday service they are leading.
  - E-mailing the song choice to the worship team scheduled for that week, as early as possible in the week and by Wednesday at the latest.
  - Being on time for service soundchecks:
    - 8.30am for the 9am service
    - 10.15am for the 11am service
    - 5pm for the 6.30pm service

**Note:** this means ensuring that both leaders and team members are ready to start the soundcheck at the aforementioned times, and not arriving in the building at these times.

- Communicating clearly with the singers and musicians before a service, and with recognisable signs during the service.
- Referring all prophetic words to the service leader responsible for the service who will listen to the words before they are given, and decide whether the word should be given then, at a later, appropriate point, or submitted in writing to the leadership team.
- Enabling and encouraging space to respond to what God is doing.
- Where a congregational response is felt to be right, this will be done with a clear explanation of what will happen, and a gentle freedom for people to participate or not.
- Thinking creatively about moving worship forward and meeting regularly with Phil.
- Enabling the implementing of the ethos of worship and encouraging all to reach their potential and work as part of a team.
- Encouraging and facilitating team-working and support and care of the group members.
- Encouraging and facilitating prayer with the service leader.
- Enabling the service leader to explain the vision of the service.
- Contributing to the decisions on new songs and the music to be used.
- Ensuring the accomplishment musically of what the service leader would like. For example, a period of instrumental music underneath intercessory prayer or a time of reflection.
- Liaising with Phil over prospective group members, and with leadership permission, auditioning, welcoming and integrating them into the group.
- Ensuring enough musicians and singers are available for services. Communicating with the team during the week before to confirm rota'd members of the band are available.
- Liaising with the service leader and AV team for each service.

- Encouraging and enabling the singers and musicians to develop their gifting.
  - Aim to finish the service by 10am for the 9am service, 12.15pm for the 11am service and 8pm for the evening services at the latest. To be aware that songs may need to be removed from the planned worship set if the service is likely to overrun.
3. **The Service Leader** has responsibility for the running of the service and bringing all the various parts together as smoothly as possible. This means:
- Arriving in good time before the service at which they are leading.
    - 8.30am for the 9am service
    - 10.30am for the 11am service
    - 6pm for the 6.30pm service
  - Communicating with the speaker, worship leader, the person leading the prayers, the AV team and anyone taking any other part of the service.
  - Creating a 'loose' order of service for all parties.
  - Taking and weighing up any prophetic words given during the service and to decide whether to share at that moment. At a later, appropriate point, potentially submitting in writing to the leadership team.
  - To clearly announce, pray, and lead the service, responding attentively to what God is doing and be a guide for the congregation. Communicating clearly with the singers and musicians before a service, and with recognisable signs during the service.
  - Ensuring that the congregation always know what is happening and that a visible lead is always present at the front.
  - Enabling and encouraging space to respond to what God is doing.
  - Thinking creatively about moving worship forward and meet regularly with Phil.
  - Where a congregational response is felt to be right, this will be done with a clear explanation of what will happen, and a gentle freedom for people to participate or not.

- Aim to finish the service by 12pm (or 8pm in evening services) at the latest. To be aware that songs may need to be removed from the planned worship set if the service is likely to overrun.

#### 4. **The Singers and Core Musicians:**

- Will have been approved to serve by the worship team leaders.
- Before scheduling themselves to lead worship at a 11am service, ensuring that they can make the Thursday evening rehearsal prior to the Sunday service.
- Lead the congregation, and do this by being visible and worshipful, balancing musical accuracy with intuitive leading. Seeking to avoid the two extremes of being so worshipful as to be locked in a private world, or so un-worshipful as to appear bored or unhappy!
- Give thought to how body language reflects the nature of the lyrics of the song. For example – if the song references the raising of hands, consider responding in turn as it gives permission for the congregation to respond.
- Look to the worship leader during the service for guidance.
- Commit themselves to be at the service and practice beforehand at which they have indicated they can play. If they are unable to play, they should let the worship leader know.
- Encourage a fellowship of worship and support for the other team.

#### 5. **Everyone should:**

- Be flexible and responsive to what God is doing and what is happening in the congregation.
- Make every effort attend Thursday evening practices and be on time for soundchecks and rehearsals prior to the Sunday services at which they are scheduled to serve.
- Make every effort to attend any additional training, worship team events or worship team meetings.
- Follow the 'Sunday morning expectations' checklist (see separate document) to follow outlined timings for the pre-service preparations. This is to ensure that the rehearsal, sound check and preparations can be carried out correctly, and all those on team have appropriate time to prepare practically and personally for worship.

- Seek to maintain the integrity of lifestyle outlined in the Church's leader's values paper. Any concerns over, or difficulties with, any values in the documents should be raised and discussed with Phil or another member of the leadership team.

## **6. Song choice and introduction**

- All new songs are to put forward to and approved by the leadership and the worship coordinator. Once decided, each new song will be introduced to the church over a 5-week period: the new song sung three weeks in a row, followed by week four with it not being played. When it is sung again on week five it will then be assessed as to the Churches response to the song, and further discussion will be had as to whether the song should continue to be used.

## **7. Back catalogue**

- All the songs that are known by the Church will be placed in a spreadsheet. Songs that are not in this spreadsheet should not be used as it is assumed that this song is not known by the Church.
- Exceptions can be made in circumstances when songs are particularly appropriate to a response in the service or a seasonal celebration. These songs should be communicated and agreed upon by the worship or service leader.

## **Policy versions**

January 2026 – policy created

September 2026 – amended due to changes to Sunday morning service times