

FOUR OAKS BAPTIST CHURCH

**PASTORAL CARE
POLICY**

July 2026

What is pastoral care?

Pastoral care at Four Oaks Baptist Church is the building up of each believer, as they become more like Jesus through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. It involves:

- Proclaiming the gospel message through worship and services.
- teaching, instruction and guidance in how to walk the Christian life.
- comforting those who are experiencing suffering, showing them love and encouragement.

Our pastoral values

All our pastoral work at Four Oaks Baptist Church is underpinned by the following values:

- Love
- Authenticity
- Community

What is our pastoral framework and how do we deliver it?

Whilst we believe that everyone at Four Oaks Baptist Church should give and receive pastoral care as part of our community, we recognise that we all walk through different challenges and seasons of life, some of which may require additional support. We see our framework as set out below.



Walking in Fellowship

- Every person in our church community is invited to participate in this tier of our pastoral framework, as we create space to renew the spirit, build friendships and share life in a faith-filled community.
- We deliver this tier of pastoral care through our Refresh & Connect programme – a calendar of social and wellbeing activities - which includes:
 - Our community garden work parties
 - Sing4Fun
 - Bike2Life
 - Monday craft time with Sally
 - Regular church walks
 - Monthly ladies' social night
 - Monthly men's curry night
 - The Carpenters Table woodwork club
 - Mid-weekly Table small groups
- An essential part of the building up of believers is the instruction and guidance of those who walk through struggles and/or whose behaviour does not reflect Christ Jesus to those around them (e.g. noticeable excessive drinking of alcohol or substance abuse). If such a case were to arise, the Minister and Elders will raise any concerns directly with the individual. Raising such matters is not intended to be judgmental and behaviour will never be met with condemnation, however it is an important part of showing love to each other, to direct believers away from harmful behaviour and towards the lifestyle and values preached by Christ Jesus.

Emergency Requests

- This tier of pastoral care ensures that anybody in our church community who is walking through temporary practical life challenges and requires additional support to walk through that challenge are provided for.
- This could include, but is not restricted to
 - Conducting hospital visits for those who are unwell.
 - Collecting shopping for those unable to travel (to be reimbursed)
 - Providing transport lifts to church, doctors appointments, etc as reasonable.
 - Providing cooked meals for those whose circumstances dictate that this would be of benefit for a short time.
 - Prayer requests.
- This tier of pastoral care is delivered through ad hoc community mobilisation. In order that requests are coordinated and organised effectively, we rely on requests being brought to the attention of our

Pastoral Team Leader, who can oversee that the request is responded to adequately and in good time.

Our Scattered Community

- This tier of our pastoral care ensures that we are continuing to reach out to those who are a part of our church community but who are now 'scattered' as they are unable to 'gather' at our physical church building, whether through illness, mobility or other circumstance, bringing the love of Jesus to them in their homes.
- We deliver this tier of pastoral care through home visiting, see below for best practice guidelines which we strive to uphold.
- Home visits are conducted by the Pastoral Team Leader, pastoral volunteers (who will receive a volunteer role profile and adequate training), and the Minister when requested. Home communion is also available upon request.

When conducting home visits...

Do...
Arrange the pastoral visit in advance either via phone or message. This allows you to confirm a suitable time and to set expectations for things such as, for example, how long you will stay (we recommend 30-40 minutes per visit).
Take a charged mobile phone that is switched on. This will allow you to contact someone in the case of an emergency.
Take a card from the church office where appropriate. We have the following available: • Get well soon – to be signed from all at FOBC. • Condolences – to be signed from all at FOBC. • Postcard to write Minister's name and contact details – to be left upon a first visit.
Pray for the person before you leave. Ask the person if they would like prayer for any specific request. Ask God to fill the person with His love and to bring His peace. You could also share a line of scripture to encourage or uplift.
Tell the pastoral team who you visited in the WhatsApp chat. This is essential to ensure accountability as well as to uphold health and safety and safeguarding policies, and will allow the Pastoral Team Lead to keep track of the visiting schedule.

Respect the privacy and dignity of those you visit, only pass along information to the Pastoral Team Lead if it is necessary.

Don't...

Don't conduct a pastoral visit outside the times of morning or early afternoon.

Don't forget about safeguarding!

- Make sure you've read our Safeguarding Policy.
- If you believe the person you are visiting is at risk or poses a risk, visit with another team member.
- If you visit alone, tell someone where and when you are going.
- Don't visit a home where there is an under 18 without another team member present.
- If you have any safeguarding concerns, report it immediately to the Minister and/or Safeguarding Lead.
- Don't accept gifts or money.

Don't take other's emotion burdens upon yourself. Leave them at the cross and talk to the Pastoral Team Lead if you need to.

Specialised Support

- This tier of our pastoral care recognises that there are those in our community who are facing challenges which impact their ability to thrive in daily life.
- This could include those experiencing bereavement, short term or long term mental health issues, loss of employment, or other life crisis.
- We deliver this tier of pastoral care by:
 - Listening with compassion to the story of those who are suffering.
 - Offering comfort through prayer and encouragement through scripture, pointing the individual or family towards the loving care of God.
 - Signposting to support services where necessary.
- This tier is primarily conducted by the Minister, Pastoral Team Leader, or Elders where appropriate. This may be delivered through home visits, or scheduled meetings in the Olive Branch Coffee Shop.
- We also recognise that those experiencing a life crisis may seek to lean on others in the church community who are not trained pastoral volunteers, such as their friends. In this case, we will do our best to ensure that adequate support is given to those involved.

Pastoral Care and Mental Health

At Four Oaks Baptist Church, we work towards breaking down stigma surrounding mental health problems. During church services, issues around mental health are regularly discussed in sermons and addressed during times of

corporate prayer and worship. We hope that this creates a safe and inclusive space, where all members of our church feel empowered to talk about the struggles they may be facing.

We recognise that prevention is often the greatest support we can give, therefore we hope that those experiencing mental health problems are able to engage with our Refresh & Connect programme, are supported to find belonging within our community, and are able to access emergency support as needed.

We also recognise the complexities of supporting people with mental health problems, including:

- The emotional needs of the individual.
- The importance of setting healthy boundaries and not seeking to deliver pastoral care which is outside our capability.
- The need to tailor the support we give to the individual, factoring in the context of their situation and the amount of support they feel comfortable receiving.

In the face of these complexities, we will always do our best to bring the love of Jesus and the friendship of the church to those experiencing mental health problems as best as we can.

Pastoral Expectations

- Any pastoral visit, meeting or digital communication with the Ministerial team will be conducted within relevant working days/hours. Exceptions to this may occur from time to time (e.g. a request to visit someone who is dying), these will be fulfilled as best as possible and will always be communicated to the Pastoral Team Leader or Minister.
- Any pastoral meeting will be held in a public place, in most instances the Olive Branch Coffee Shop, where there is open visibility. However, the location will be arranged so that conversations are not overheard by others.

Safeguarding

At Four Oaks Baptist Church, we take safeguarding very seriously, and we ensure that our pastoral policy and safeguarding policy work to support and strengthen each other.

You can find the full safeguarding policy at the link below.

[Safeguarding Policy for FOBC 2026.pdf](#)

Remember - safeguarding at Four Oaks Baptist Church is everyone's responsibility!

Confidentiality

Due to the nature of pastoral work, our team will inevitably have access to confidential information relating to members of our church community. We expect our team to not disclose this information to any person either during their time as part of our church or at any time afterwards.

However, in line with our safeguarding policy, it may be necessary to disclose information to our Designated Safeguarding Lead and/or the Minister. This will only occur in circumstances where the person is at risk.



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Revisions

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