

# Reimagine Foursquare – Process for an Incoming Church to Join Foursquare via a Covenant Agreement

## Context:

In 2013, The Foursquare Church embarked on an ongoing journey of kingdom expansion and innovation through an initiative called “[Reimagine Foursquare](#).” This journey came with a solemn commitment from our president, board and executive leadership team; a commitment with five parts that we have called the five stakes:

1. Align everything Foursquare to the Great Commission.
2. Align the National Church Office and district offices to a catalytic culture.
3. Align 100 percent of the tithe to the field, local and district.
4. Align Foursquare Foundation to resourcing and supporting the Foursquare mission.
5. Align polity to provide property options for local churches.

This commitment inspired a journey of discernment, dialogue and discovery with the goal of modernizing the structure of the denomination to enhance our missional and organizational effectiveness as a movement. Through this process, Foursquare is realigning all resources toward the objectives of making disciples, developing leaders of diverse people groups, multiplying churches and missional congregations, and fostering movements within our movement.

Creating inroads for likeminded church leaders to join the Foursquare movement is a central focus of the Reimagine process. Consequently, stake #5 required a shift in polity that has been part of our movement since its formation. In June 2016, The Foursquare convention body ratified a bylaw amendment to allow churches with their own legal existence to join Foursquare without requiring dissolution of their own corporation or requiring transfer of their property to the ICFG corporation. This bylaw amendment now allows churches with separate corporations to join the Foursquare movement as a Covenant church. This relationship is consummated through a written covenant between the local church board and the board of directors of ICFG. Through this covenant agreement, the local church voluntarily subordinates its bylaws to those of ICFG and will become a Foursquare church with respect to all ecclesiastical, polity and relational matters.

## Step 1: Consultation - Beginning the journey

Leaders of a prospective Covenant church, should begin by contacting the [local district office](#) who serves as the first point of contact for any questions during the application process. The district office is led by a district supervisor who, along with his/her staff, is commissioned to champion and facilitate three missional objectives with the churches they serve:

- **Leadership Development**—the intentional development of disciples and leaders in a local church
- **Church Transformation**—community engagement in missional activity as well as intentional efforts toward church and pastoral health
- **Church Multiplication and Movement-Making**—establishing and supporting new churches as well as “missional congregations,” such as ethnic congregations, satellite locations, multi-site churches and other models that result in movements within the movement

As your church considers entering a covenant relationship with the Foursquare family, we invite you to visit the [Foursquare website](#) and learn about [the Foursquare story](#), [what we believe](#), and [our mission](#). If your church would like to move forward in the process, you should request a meeting between the local district supervisor and your leadership team to pray and discern together God's plan for your church in this process.

## **Step 2: Orientation video**

This [orientation video](#) will help orient you and the church to the Foursquare Covenant church process by outlining the important aspects of the covenant relationship, and the steps involved in the application process.

We also recommend you also read the [Frequently Asked Questions Document](#), which may answer some of the questions you and your leadership may have about the process.

## **Step 3: Foursquare ministerial credential – Senior Pastor**

One important requirement of all Foursquare churches (including Covenant churches) is for the senior pastor to maintain an active Foursquare ministerial credential. During the Covenant church application process, any senior pastor who does not have a Foursquare ministerial credential will be invited to complete Foursquare's ministerial licensing process. This process will cover the history, doctrine and polity of the Foursquare Church. This process will also help to confirm whether the doctrinal beliefs of the applicant church and the Foursquare movement are compatible.

While the senior pastor progresses through the ministerial licensing process, the district office will assign him/her a coach to assist some of the steps. During this time, the district office can continue to process the Covenant church application and supporting documents. However, the senior pastor will need to receive their ministerial credential before the covenant agreement can be signed and fully executed by the ICFG board of directors.

## **Step 4: Documentation - Prepare AR 1-c forms and supplemental info**

To initiate the application process your district office will provide Foursquare form AR-1c, "Application to Become a Covenant church." This form includes a request for copies of the documents listed below, along with a short questionnaire about past legal and financial activities of your organization.

The documents listed below (and itemized in section 2 of form AR-1c) will be reviewed by the district office, and various departments of the central office as part of the application process.

If the church must form a corporation, Foursquare has pre-negotiated prices with startchurch.com. Startchurch may be contacted at [www.startchurch.com](http://www.startchurch.com) or 1-844-549-4506. Please mention Foursquare when calling to receive the right incorporation documents and the special pricing of \$699. The church must use startchurch.com or an attorney to form a corporation.

### **Articles of incorporation**

The applicant church will be asked to supply the articles of incorporation filed by the local church corporation. If there have been any subsequently filed amendments (which is rare), please supply dated copies of those amendments as well.

Applicant churches that are not incorporated should notify the district office up front in order to determine next steps.

## Bylaws

Most churches whether incorporated or unincorporated have bylaws that govern the operations of the church. In signing the [covenant agreement](#), the local church board voluntarily agrees to apply Foursquare bylaws in place of its own bylaws and to operate the church under all Foursquare adopted policies and procedures. As a result, the local church will be recognized as a Foursquare church (as defined in the Foursquare bylaws) with respect to all ecclesiastical, polity and relational issues. For real property transaction purposes, the local church will follow the Covenant church property transaction process as outlined in the Foursquare bylaws. There are two unique provisions in our bylaws regarding the real property transaction process for Covenant churches. A Covenant church does not obtain ICFG board approval for a property transaction and the transaction will be placed in the name of the local church and not ICFG.

*Note: By signing the covenant agreement, your church board voluntarily agrees that the Foursquare bylaws will supersede your existing bylaws; thus, there should be no need to make any amendments to your bylaws.*

## Insurance policies

Every Foursquare (Charter or Covenant) church is required to maintain adequate insurance for church activities. This obligation is the joint responsibility of the pastor and members of the church board/council.

While the Foursquare Insurance Department is available to provide consulting to a Covenant church, that insurance program cannot legally be made available to Covenant churches once they form separate corporations and discontinue as subordinate units of ICFG. As a result, Covenant churches must obtain insurance from a separate carrier.

Copies of current insurance policies (including property, liability, worker's compensation, sexual misconduct and officer's/directors insurance) should be submitted with the application so the Foursquare Insurance Department can confirm that the new policies meet required minimum coverage limits. These minimum coverage limits can be found in the Insurance Service Policy Notebook on the Foursquare Insurance Department Webpage under the section titled, "Information for Securing Insurance with a Carrier other than through Foursquare Insurance Services."

The following insurance carriers are known to provide coverage that satisfies the listed requirements:

- Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Co. (260) 482-8668
- Guide One Insurance Co. (877) 448-4331
- Church Mutual Insurance Co. (800) 554-2642
- Farmers Insurance Co. (800) 493-4917

When making contact with these companies, church leaders should ask for an agent referral in their area.

### 2 years' financial history

The church will be asked to submit to the district office the past two years' financial history, which would include the statement of financial position (balance sheet) and the statement of financial activities (income statement).

### List of current officers and directors

Please provide a list of the names and positions of the corporate officers and names of the board of directors of your church corporation with the submission of the Form AR-1c.

### IRS 501(c)3's determination letter

If your church has IRS 501(c)3 tax exempt status, your church will retain its existing 501(c)3 tax exempt status with the IRS for your corporation. Please supply a copy of the IRS determination letter with the submission of form AR-1c.

If your church does not yet have 501(c)3 status, after the covenant agreement is signed by the officers of ICFG, the corporate secretary's office will notify the IRS that your church corporation is to be included under ICFG's group exemption. The corporate secretary's office will notify you in writing of this submission and will send you a letter from the IRS indicating the corporation has been included under the group 501(c)3 exemption status of ICFG. Please keep this letter as part of the church's permanent records.

### Certificate of good standing from state of incorporation

Please provide a current certificate of good standing for the church corporation from the state the church was incorporated in. A certificate of good standing is a document that shows a corporation has met the statutory requirements and is authorized to do business in the state. **This letter must be dated within six months of the ICFG board resolution to approve the Charter to Covenant church transition.**

## Step 5: Congregational Vote for Covenant Agreement

The covenant is an agreement detailing the nature and relationship between the local church and The Foursquare Church. Foursquare commits that the covenant arrangement entitles the Covenant church to all of the organizational benefits that are available to Foursquare churches. In turn, the Covenant church agrees to voluntarily adopt the Foursquare bylaws in place of its own bylaws and agrees to follow and operate under all Foursquare adopted policies and procedures. Because this is a very significant commitment for a church, the [covenant agreement](#) requires ratification by a  $\frac{3}{4}$  supermajority of the congregants and attestation of such through the signatures of the senior pastor and church board members.

## Step 6: Submit of Form AR-1c to the District Office

A complete application packet will consist of Foursquare form AR-1c, the signed Covenant church agreement documenting the  $\frac{3}{4}$ <sup>th</sup> supermajority vote, along with the supporting documents itemized on form AR-1c. Once complete, this packet should be sent to the district office. The district office will review and approve the application which will then be forwarded to

the ICFG central office for board approval. If there are any additional follow-up questions or missing documentation, the district office will follow up directly with the applicant.

If your church also operates a school, preschool or daycare, please see the [Schools, Preschools and/or Daycare Section](#) in the appendix.

### **Step 7: Application Review by ICFG Central Office**

Upon receiving the completed form AR-1c application package and the signed Covenant church agreement, the Foursquare central office will review the application and documentation provided. When the review is complete, the application will be submitted for inclusion on the ICFG board agenda.

### **Step 8: Board Approval**

Once the central office staff has reviewed the completed application and supplemental documents, the ICFG board will record a formal resolution to consummate the covenant agreement.

### **Step 9: ICFG Signs Covenant Agreement**

Upon approval, the covenant agreement will be sent to the corporate secretary's office to obtain signatures on behalf of the ICFG's board of directors. The district office will provide a written copy of the board resolution and a copy of the signed covenant agreement for the permanent records of the local church corporation.

### **Step 10: Registration in the Foursquare database, The Hub**

Membership and activity records for every Foursquare church and minister are tracked in a database known as "The Foursquare Hub." The Hub also serves as the portal for reporting missional and financial activity of the church, tracking appointments of Foursquare ministers, applying for ministerial credentials and many other important functions. The district office will assign the senior pastor and his/her designees with login credentials to The Foursquare Hub database. The senior pastor and those handling the administrative aspects of the church should become familiar with The Hub by watching the [tutorial videos](#) available through the [Foursquare Administrative Toolkit](#). Please contact your district office if you have not yet been assigned login credentials for The Foursquare Hub.

### **Step 11: District team welcomes Covenant church**

As a way to celebrate and honor your entry into the Foursquare family, the district office will present your church with a covenant plaque. Your district office will contact you to schedule this presentation.

The district office will include your church in communications regarding upcoming events such as camps, leadership trainings and other regular communications. You will also be receiving communications from our national office including invitations to participate in national events such as Connection, our convention for Foursquare ministers.

### **Step 12: Local Church Board Responsibilities**

As stated in the covenant agreement, your church board will retain responsibility for the administration of the local church corporation and will serve as the "church council" for all responsibilities referenced in the Foursquare bylaws and policies. The local church board will be responsible to maintain its corporate status and comply with all state and federal laws.

### **Step 13: Ongoing support, resources, consultation and care**

The Foursquare church has many resources available through the Foursquare [administrative toolkit](#). This is a compilation of videos, templates, diagrams and other helpful resources that may assist the church with administrative questions and provide practical tools on topics such as the legal and financial responsibilities of pastoral leaders, clergy taxation, church compensation practices and the roles and responsibilities of a church council.

The district office will continue to provide ongoing care and consultation for your church. If at any time your church has a question or concern, the district office will serve as the first point of contact.

### **Appendix A:**

#### **Schools, Preschools and/or Daycares**

If your church operates a school, preschool and/or daycare under the same corporation as the existing church, the school, preschool and/or daycare would, as part of the covenant agreement, need to adhere to the Foursquare guidelines as set forth by ICFG. The guidelines can be found in section 13 of the [Foursquare Handbook of Operation](#) or by contacting the National Church Office.

The school, preschool and/or daycare would as part of the covenant application process need to complete the school, preschool and/or daycare application form (supplied to you by the district office) and provide the following documents to the district office as part of the covenant process:

- Copy of the state license certificate
- Copy of the fire safety approval
- Copy of local health department approval
- Teacher contracts (for schools)
- Tuition schedule
- Financials for last two years (profit and loss and balance sheet)
- Employee handbook
- Parent handbook

If the school, preschool and/or daycare operates under its own corporation (separate from your church corporation), then the school, preschool and/or daycare will continue as a separate entity. The school, preschool and/or daycare will not be subject to the ICFG requirements or oversight and will not be included as part of the covenant agreement.