

# **Blue Grass Church, Inc. Pastoral Succession Plan**

**Theme for Succession:** Setup for Takeoff

## **Succession Purpose**

Blue Grass Church will utilize its disciple-making mission to foster an atmosphere of staff growth and lay empowerment to facilitate an effective leadership culture. The vision for each Blue Grass staff succession is to ensure a prayerful, Spirit-led transition for the spiritual benefit of all involved.

## **The Day After Vision**

Blue Grass will be well-equipped and positioned with the information, resources, structure, and leadership to advance the mission of being disciple-makers through the vision of developing strong relationships with Christ, one another, and the community.

## **Succession Planning Objectives**

- Maintain unity and consistency of leadership, mission, vision, and theological heritage.
- Uphold biblical standards for pastoral leadership.
- Encourage the development of leadership within the church body.
- Provide a prayerful and thoughtful selection and transition process.

## **Formation of the Pastoral Search Committee**

- A search committee will be appointed by the Administrative Council that will include two persons nominated by Staff Parish, two congregation members nominated by the Lay Leadership team (not on SPRC or Ad. Council), and two Administrative Council members along with one full-time ministry staff person which will be voted on by Administrative Council. All nominated persons then need to be approved by Administrative Council to officially form the Search Committee.
- The committee will operate in prayer, confidentiality, and consensus with the guidance of Scripture and the Holy Spirit.

## **Formation of Prayer Team**

- When the congregation has been notified of the Search Committee, a prayer team will be formed by the Committee with the input of pastoral staff.
- The Search Committee will communicate pertinent high-level information to the Prayer Team so they may pray specifically for the process.
- The Prayer Team, as an extension of the Search Committee, will operate with absolute confidentiality.

## **Step 1: Priority Identification of Pastoral Qualities**

- The committee will prioritize pastoral qualities and skills needed.
- A job description will be created.
- The committee will utilize surveys, inventories, and other resources to accomplish this task. (e.g. Staff Time Study, etc.)

## **Step 2: Identification and Evaluation of In-House Candidates**

Timeline: Within 30 days of the position being declared open.

Process:

-Solicit interest from current pastoral staff within Blue Grass Church by asking them to provide:

- Their call to ministry

- Their education and work history
- Their spiritual gifts, skills, and talents
- Other assessment results as known or asked for
- Answers to theological questions as determined by the committee

-Assess internal candidates based on:

- Education and ministry experience
- Alignment with the mission, vision, and theology of Blue Grass Church
- Spiritual maturity
- Congregational trust and fruit of ministry
- Formal interviews and reference checks
- Opportunity for congregational input
- If needed, provide additional opportunities for candidates to preach, teach, or lead.

Outcome:

- If a qualified in-house candidate is affirmed by the Search Committee and approved by SPRC/Administrative Council, the search concludes.
- If no in-house candidate is affirmed, proceed to Step 3.

### **Step 3: External Search Process**

Timeline: Begins immediately after in-house review is completed.

Process:

- Post the position publicly through ministry job boards, networks, and relevant platforms.
- Engage a professional pastoral search or recruiting firm if determined beneficial by the Search Committee and approved by the Administrative Council.
- Screen applications and conduct interviews using the same standards as for in-house candidates.
- Invite top candidates for visits, preaching, and interviews with SPRC, Ad. Council, Staff, and congregation.

### **Final Selection and Transition**

- Once a finalist is identified (internal or external) by the Search Team, they will present to Administrative Council for final vote of approval and present to congregation in accordance with Blue Grass Church bylaws.
- Develop a transition plan that may include overlap with the outgoing pastor, onboarding, and public installation/ordination.

### **Ongoing Leadership Development**

- Encourage ongoing identification and development of future leaders from within.
- Provide training, mentoring, and opportunities for growth in ministry and leadership.

### **Review Succession Plan Annually**

- At a designated annual Staff Parish and Administrative Council meeting, review the plan and modify as needed.

Approved by:

Administrative Council – Blue Grass Church, Inc.

Date: August 21, 2025