

FEB CENTRAL CHURCH RECOGNITION PROCESS

The *FEB Central Church Recognition Process* outlines the procedures and requirements involved for a local church to become a member church in The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada – Central Region (FEB Central) and The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada (FEBCC). The process examines the fit between the local church and our movement by exploring the church’s doctrinal beliefs, commitment to God’s purpose for the church, governance, financial health and embrace of our distinctives.

STEP ONE: Church Approaches FEB Central

To begin the recognition process, the local church must initiate contact with the FEB Central office to communicate their interest in becoming a partner church. If there is an existing affiliation, FEB Central will request that the church leadership communicate with the appropriate leaders of their present affiliation that they are seeking to enter a process with FEB Central to formally partner and affiliate with FEB Central and the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada. Ending their present affiliation, though not necessary during the exploration process, is a requirement to become a member church of FEB Central and the Fellowship.

In this first step, FEB Central staff will seek to support the process toward partnership by acting as a resource of information about FEB Central, FEBCC, and the process, requirements, and privileges of becoming a member church. This will entail a variety of communications and meetings with the leaders and congregation to talk about the distinctives of our movement, our constating documents (e.g., Affirmation of faith, bylaws, policy statements), Stronger Together document, Church Recognition Procedures and Requirements and answer questions about who we are and the process of becoming a FEB Central church.

FEB Central will also act as a liaison with the association and its leaders who will walk with the leaders of the church as they seek to become a member church with FEB Central. A representative of the association will be responsible to work with a church representative(s) to organize the participants, key dates, and details for both the pre-recognition meeting and the recognition meeting.

STEP TWO: The Pre-Recognition Council

The second step in the process involves a thorough vetting of fit between the church and FEB Central. This step will involve at least one formal meeting with local association leaders and a representative(s) of FEB Central staff to discuss the convictions and practices of the church seeking affiliation, as well as a more in depth look at the distinctives of our Fellowship of Baptist churches. Questions and answers of clarification will be a key element of this meeting. Key documents from the local church and FEB Central/FEBCC will provide the basis of discussion in this meeting. The documents to be discussed include:

From the church:

1. Constitution/bylaw(s)/Articles of Incorporation
2. Confirmation of Leadership (Pastor, Elders and/or Deacons)
3. Charitable status with CRA
4. Demonstration of financial health (financial statements)
5. The signed covenant of agreement (see attached)
6. Any other relevant documents requested by FEB Central (e.g. philosophy of ministry, mission, vision, values, policies, etc.)
7. Church Plants are required to obtain a letter from the Church Planting Director as part of the application process.

From FEB Central & FEBCC:

1. The Affirmation of Faith of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada
2. The Bylaws and Policies of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada and FEB Central
3. Stronger Together statement regarding vision for partnership
4. Financial documents from both FEB Central and FEB National
5. The signed covenant of agreement (see attached)
6. Any other relevant documents requested by the church (policies, mission, vision, values statements, etc.)

The above documents should be read by the participants prior to the pre recognition meeting. The participants of the meeting will include 2-3 representatives of the church seeking recognition (e.g., Lead Pastor, Elders, Deacons, Staff, etc.), 3-5 area association representatives, and at least one FEB Central representative. The moderator, association representative or a FEB Central staff person will oversee the pre-recognition meeting. After prayer and a brief overview (10-15 min) of the church from church leaders, FEB Central representatives will ask questions of clarification regarding the church and its constating documents (see list above). The church leaders will also have the opportunity to ask further questions of clarification about FEB Central/FEBCC and its constating documents. Following a thorough discussion, the person chairing the meeting will lead in a time of prayer and the church representatives will be dismissed. The FEB Central team will then debrief and discuss any concerns or need for further

investigation, communication or meetings. If there is a need for more clarification or discussion, the person leading the meeting will be responsible to seek out the information or organize an additional meeting on behalf of FEB Central. If there is agreement to proceed with the recognition of the church, the leader chairing the meeting will inform the church representatives and the association that a Recognition Council is to be called. The chair of this meeting will make the necessary arrangements with the church and the association for the date, time, and location of the Recognition Council (as soon as possible after the Pre- recognition meeting).

STEP THREE: The Recognition Council

Following the affirmation of the pre-recognition council, a Recognition Council will be held to formally approve and receive the church into FEB Central and the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches of Canada. Arrangements will be made by the association to invite (by mail or electronically) official representatives from the area association churches to a formal recognition council. This communication should include an encouragement to disclose to association leaders any concern regarding proceeding with formal Recognition of the church.

The documents of the church examined at the pre-recognition council will be sent ahead of time to the registered delegates (or the churches) for their perusal. At the formal recognition council, the chair of the Pre-recognition Council or a FEB Central staff person will lead the meeting. He will begin with a time of prayer, followed by the church leaders giving an overview of their church (its history, distinctives, etc.) and why they are seeking to become a FEB Central church. A representative of the Pre-Recognition Council will then share a summary of their meeting and their recommendation to proceed with Recognition. An opportunity will then be given for questions by the delegates present. When sufficient time has been given for questions and answers, the chair will close in prayer. The church representatives (along with any guests) will be asked to step out of the meeting to allow the Council to deliberate. Once the Council has consensus to proceed with Recognition, a motion of recognition of the church will be made, seconded and approved by the Council. The church representatives will then be invited to return to the meeting to hear the positive conclusion (approved motion) of the Council.¹ The meeting will be ended with prayer. Ideally, the formal Council will be followed by an informal reception (lunch, desert, etc.) where the church leaders will have an opportunity to meet and get to know the leaders of the association churches present.

¹ A suggested formal motion for the council: "The (name of association) moves to recognize (name of church) as a member church of FEB Central." Moved by: (Council member name). Seconded by: (Council member name). Passed.

After the Recognition Council has occurred, a representative of the association will formally inform the Regional Director of FEB Central of the Church's recognition. Minutes of the Council should be forwarded to the FEB Central ministry centre. The final step will be the affirmation of the Council's Recognition of the church by the FEB Central Regional Board (by means of an approved motion) at its next duly called meeting or by means of electronic voting.²

Once the Regional Board has voted to affirm the Recognition of the church by the Council, a letter from the FEB Central Director or his representative will be sent to the church formally welcoming them as a partner/member church. Becoming part of FEB Central also means they become part of FEBCC, our National Fellowship of churches across Canada. The FEB Central office will begin sending formal communications to the church as well as send the churches' contact information to the National office so they can send appropriate communication to them.

In the case where a particular association of churches faces limitations in size, location, and resources, steps two and three of the Recognition process may be blended into a single step for a given church. As well, in this case, FEB Central staff may also have a greater role in leading the process forward to formal recognition, while seeking as much input and feedback from the association churches as possible.

It is expected that a signed copy of the Covenant of Agreement from the church and FEB Central is given to the FEB Central office as well as to the newly recognized church for their records.

In light of the new affiliation, it may be necessary for an ordained Pastor(s) of the new FEB Central member church to seek out recognition of their ordination by their association, so that the FEB Central office can proceed with credentialing with the Marriage Registry. This recognition of ordination is not automatic; the appropriate process must be followed for the recognition so that the FEB Central ministry centre can apply for marriage credentials.³ Lastly, the new member church will need to contact the National Fellowship office in regards to transfer of Pension and to begin health benefits with the Fellowship.

² A suggested formal motion to be approved by the FEB Central Board: "Move that the FEB Central board approve the Recognition by the (name of association) of (name of church) (location of the church) on (month) (day), (year)." Moved by: (Council member name). Seconded by: (Council member name). Passed.

³ See "FEB Central Ordination Procedures & Credentialing," additional notes, for guidance on the recognition of ordinations by associations.

FEB CENTRAL CHURCH PLANTING RECOGNITION PROCESS

There are three broad categories in which FEB Central Church Plants fit. They are: 1. Multisite/Satellite Ministries, 2. External Church Plants that Join FEB Central while already in process, and 3. Mother-daughter & Association church plants. With this kind of diversity in our approach to ministry it requires a slightly different approach to what we have traditionally called “recognition”.

1. **Multisite / Satellite Ministries** —These ministries are intended to remain as “one church” with the mother site. As such, they do not require formal recognition as a separate member church of FEB Central. In order to acknowledge the site’s coming of age and to remove them from the church planting list, they are granted “Site-Recognition” when the multisite/satellite church plant is considered stable at the discretion of church planting staff and the mother church. The first step in the process is to obtain a letter of approval from the Church Planting Director.

2. **External Church Plants that join FEB Central while already in process** — The first step in the application process for a Church Plant is to obtain a letter of approval from the Church Planting Director. When these churches receive CRA charitable status and are self-sustaining they are required to proceed with their local association through the church recognition process for churches joining FEB Central.

3. **Mother-daughter & Association Church Plants** —These church plants are born out of FEB Central member churches and as such when one of these plants has established a constitution/incorporation, is recognized by CRA as a charity, has begun public worship, and is in support of Stronger Together or its equivalent, having signed the FEB Central Covenant of Agreement and has obtained a letter of approval from the Church Planting Director, it will be considered a FEB Central member church with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities.

FEB CENTRAL COVENANT OF AGREEMENT WITH MEMBER CHURCHES

To Member Churches:

In seeking to minister effectively to our family of churches and partner with them enabling them to develop leaders, plant churches, and maximize church health, we give our affirmation and agreement to offer the following resources such as listed below:

1. Leadership Development

- Next Gen Leaders/Internships
- Networks such as Next Level Leadership & Church Revitalization
- Pastoral Search Support – Profiles and Transitions
- Webinars and Workshops
- Equipping Events for Senior Pastors, Pastoral Staff, and Volunteer Leaders

2. Church Planting

- Providing Experienced Insight
- Resourcing with Start-Up Funds (up to \$25,000)
- Recruitment and Assessment System for Church Planters
- Training for Churches and Pastors
- Coaching for Each Church Planter

3. Church Health

- Association Shepherds, District Shepherds, and Pastor Care
- Church Consultations
- Intentional Interim Ministries/Training
- 'Rebirth Mergers'/Church Fostering
- Reconciliation Resourcing

The region also hosts two conferences for the constituency each spring. A business meeting with financial and staff reporting, and a leadership conference with an emphasis on equipping and spiritual encouragement.

Signed on behalf of the FEB Central Region: _____
(Regional Director)

Date: _____

**COVENANT OF AGREEMENT AND APPLICATION FOR
MEMBERSHIP IN THE FEB CENTRAL REGION OF
THE FELLOWSHIP OF EVANGELICAL BAPTIST CHURCHES IN CANADA**

Dear Friends:

This is to certify that the _____ Church in _____ was recognized as a regularly constituted Baptist Church by a Council composed of _____ Messengers from _____ Fellowship Baptist Churches. These assembled on the _____ day of _____ 20____ .

In affirmation of and agreement with the following:

1. With the Affirmation of Faith of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.
2. With the Bylaws of the Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.
3. With the Bylaws of FEB CENTRAL Region.
4. To financially support FEB Central's General Operating budget in accordance with the fee structure outlined in the Stronger Together document and endeavour to financially support FEB Central's church planting initiatives.
5. To give priority in our missions budget to the support of the Fellowship – National, French, International and others.
6. To participate in our local FEB CENTRAL Association, FEB CENTRAL Region, Fellowship activities and events as we are able.

We _____ Church do hereby make application for membership in The Fellowship of Evangelical Baptist Churches in Canada.

Signed on behalf of the _____ Church

Date _____

(Church Trustee or Officer)

NOTE: Please include the following information with the application:

- (1) Copy of the Minutes of Regional Council where applicable.
- (2) Copy of Minutes of Recognition Council.