(POL-FACILITIES) Facilities Use and Building Stewardship Policy

General Board Approved: May 31, 2026

A Revision of Facilities Use Policy Adoption Date: 08/09/2015

1. Purpose

The buildings, grounds, furnishings, and equipment of 1st Free Will Baptist Church are gifts from God. They exist to glorify Him, serve His people, support the ministry of the church, and bless our community.

The church desires to make its facilities available for worship, ministry, fellowship, family gatherings, and appropriate community use. This policy is intended to encourage the wise and generous use of the church's facilities while also protecting the church, caring for the property, and ensuring that all use is consistent with our Christian faith, mission, and testimony.

2. General Principle

The church does not view its facilities merely as property to be rented, but as resources entrusted to us for ministry and service.

Facility use should be approved, responsible, safe, and consistent with the beliefs, values, schedule, and stewardship responsibilities of the church.

3. Authority

Facility use may be approved by a pastor and/or the Board of Trustees, according to the nature of the request.

Routine requests may be approved by a pastor or designated church leader.

Requests may be referred to the General Board when they involve:

- Recurring or long-term use;
- Outside organizations;
- Larger events;
- Events with higher risk;
- Unusual scheduling needs;
- Questions about alignment with church beliefs, mission, or policy;
- Any matter that leadership believes requires broader review.

The church reserves the right to approve, deny, limit, or cancel facility use when necessary for ministry priorities, safety, stewardship, scheduling, policy compliance, or consistency with the church's faith and testimony.

4. Priority of Use

Church ministries, worship gatherings, official church meetings, funerals, and church-sponsored events have priority over all other facility requests.

Other requests will normally be considered in the order received, while also considering the nature of the event, availability of the facility, ministry needs, and responsible stewardship of the property.

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5. Who May Use the Facilities

The church may approve facility use for:

- Church ministries and official church activities;
- Church members and their families;
- Regular attenders connected to the church;
- Community individuals, families, groups, or organizations when the requested use does not conflict with the church's faith, mission, policies, values, or testimony.

Approval of facility use does not imply church sponsorship, endorsement, or responsibility for the event unless the event is officially approved as a church ministry or church-sponsored activity.

6. Reservations

Requests to use church facilities should be made through a pastor, trustee, church office, or other person designated by the Trustee Board.

A Facility Use Request Form may be required, especially for non-member use, recurring use, larger events, or events requiring special setup, sound, kitchen use, childcare, or other support.

An event should not be considered approved or placed as final on the church calendar until approval has been granted.

If an approved event is cancelled, the person responsible for the event should notify the Lead Pastor or a member of the Trustee Board as soon as possible.

7. Fees, Deposits, and Custodial Costs

The church does not rent its facilities for profit.

In some cases, a deposit, custodial fee, facility use fee, or reimbursement for expenses may be requested. These fees are intended to help cover cleaning, supplies, utilities, damages, or additional costs connected to facility use.

Fees may vary depending on the nature of the event, areas used, custodial needs, length of use, recurring use, and whether the event is connected to a church member, ministry, or outside group.

Fees may be reduced or waived by a pastor, the Board of Trustees, or the General Board when appropriate, including for ministry benefit, financial need, community service, funerals, or other compassionate reasons.

Any fee schedule may be maintained separately from this policy and updated as needed by the Board of Trustees, subject to review or approval by the General Board.

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8. Responsible Person

Every approved event must have a responsible adult designated as the event contact.

The responsible person is expected to:

- Be present for the event unless other arrangements are approved;
- Make sure the event follows church policy;
- Protect church property;
- Supervise setup, cleanup, and closing;
- Report damage, injuries, safety concerns, or other incidents to the Lead Pastor or a member of the Trustee Board;
- Make sure the building is left clean, orderly, and secure.

For outside groups or organizations, a church member or approved church representative may be required to be present.

9. General Guidelines

Facility use must not conflict with the church's Christian faith, mission, policies, values, or testimony.

The following guidelines apply:

- No alcoholic beverages are permitted on church property.
- No smoking or vaping is permitted inside church buildings.
- No illegal drugs or unlawful activity are permitted on church property.
- Fundraising, sales, offerings, or collections require prior approval.
- Sound systems, livestream equipment, projectors, and musical instruments may be used only with permission.
- Church instruments may not be moved without approval.
- Furniture and equipment should not be removed from church property without approval.
- Anything likely to damage walls, woodwork, flooring, furniture, or fixtures should not be used.
- Food and beverages should be kept in approved areas unless permission is given.
- Offices, storage areas, nursery areas, sound booth, and other restricted areas may be used only with permission.
- Personal items left at the church are not the responsibility of the church.

10. Children, Youth, and Vulnerable Adults

Any event involving children, youth, or vulnerable adults must follow applicable church safety policies.

When childcare, nursery care, youth activities, or vulnerable adult care are provided during a facility use event, the event must follow the church's Child, Youth, and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and any related screening, supervision, and reporting policies.

Outside groups may be required to provide evidence of appropriate supervision, screening, child protection practices, and insurance before using the facility.

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11. Kitchen and Food Use

Kitchen use may be approved as part of a facility request.

Those using the kitchen are responsible for:

- Using food preparation areas safely and respectfully;
- Cleaning counters, appliances, sinks, dishes, tables, and floors used during the event;
- Removing or properly storing leftover food;
- Emptying trash as needed;
- Reporting spills, damage, or equipment problems.

12. Cleanup and Closing

All groups are expected to leave the facilities as they found them, unless other arrangements have been approved.

Cleanup and closing normally include:

- Removing decorations;
- Returning tables, chairs, and furniture to their proper places;
- Cleaning food and drink spills;
- Washing and putting away dishes used;
- Emptying trash and replacing trash bags;
- Checking bathrooms;
- Turning off lights and electronic equipment;
- Returning thermostats to the proper setting;
- Locking doors;
- Reporting any damage or concerns.

If additional cleaning is required after an event, the church may keep part or all of a deposit or request reimbursement for custodial costs.

13. Insurance and Liability

The person or group using the facility is responsible for the conduct, safety, and supervision of those participating in the event.

The church is not responsible for accidents, injuries, illnesses, damages, theft, or personal items left behind except as required by law.

Outside organizations, recurring users, higher-risk events, or events involving significant public attendance may be required to provide proof of liability insurance and may be required to name the church as an additional insured.

The church may also require a signed facility use agreement, acknowledgment of responsibility, or waiver when appropriate.

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14. Damage or Misuse

Any damage, unsafe condition, injury, or unusual incident should be reported to the Lead Pastor or the Trustees as soon as possible.

Those using the facility may be responsible for repair, replacement, cleaning, or other costs resulting from damage, misuse, negligence, or failure to follow this policy.

Future facility use may be denied or limited if a person or group misuses the property, fails to clean up, creates safety concerns, or acts inconsistently with church policy or testimony.

15. Disasters and Community Emergencies

In the event of a natural disaster, public emergency, or other community crisis, church facilities may be made available for emergency, relief, or community support purposes as deemed appropriate by the General Board.

16. Review

This policy shall be reviewed periodically by the General Board and may be revised as needed.

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