

Living Hope Baptist Church Bylaws

(our life together defined by how we operate)

ARTICLE 1 –Covenant Church Membership

Meaningful church membership is one of the foundations of authentic discipleship for God's people. Church membership is a wonderful privilege and a demanding responsibility, both of which are reflected in the processes and policies that shape our life together.

A. Definition of Covenant Church Membership: A covenant member of Living Hope Baptist Church is a person who is at least 16 years old and has individually

1. **confessed** both repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord
2. **publicly professed** that faith through believer's baptism by immersion
3. **affirmed** the Living Hope Articles of Faith and their commitment to the Living Hope Church Covenant and
4. **completed** the church's membership process

B. The Process of Covenant Church Membership

1. **Participation in the church membership class:** All individuals who desire to pursue church membership are required to participate in the membership class, which is offered several times each year. The class will introduce the beliefs (Articles of Faith), vision, mission, leadership, and ministries of this church, including an overview of the Church's governing documents and a clear explanation of the responsibilities and privileges of the Church Covenant.

2. **Completion of the church membership application,** which is presented to membership class participants. This includes

- 2.1. **unreserved affirmation of the Living Hope Articles of Faith**
- 2.2. **joyful commitment to the Living Hope Church Covenant**
- 2.3. **a written description giving testimony of one's salvation experience**
- 2.4. **identification of one of the following specific means of membership:**

2.4.1. **by baptism as an initial public profession of faith in Jesus Christ** following a confession of both repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ alone as Savior & Lord. (One does not have to join this church to be baptized).

2.4.2. **by transfer of membership** from another Southern Baptist Church. In such cases, it will be the duty of this church to promptly request a letter from the other church both confirming that the individual is a member in good standing and that their membership has been released to Living Hope Baptist Church.

2.4.3. **by statement of faith,** affirming that one has previously repented of sin and placed faith in Jesus Christ alone as Savior and Lord, followed by a public profession of that faith through believer's baptism by immersion, and may now be part of a non-Southern Baptist church. Those who have come to Christ and expressed their discipleship through baptism of a different mode or meaning will be requested to be baptized by immersion as a continuing reaffirmation of their faith, a witness to the biblical understanding of believer's baptism, and an act of unity with the doctrinal commitments and practices of this Church.

Regardless of the means by which one enters the membership process, the completion and signing of this application make an individual a membership candidate.

3. **Membership Conversation** All membership candidates will complete a membership conversation with an approved leader of the church to discuss their membership application, testimony of faith, affirmation of the Articles of Faith and commitment to the Living Hope Church Covenant. In writing, the approved leader will then present to the Elders their reasons for a recommendation to confirm, delay, or reject the candidate's membership application.
4. **Consideration and Action by the Elders** The completed membership applications and recommendations for all candidates will be presented to a regular central Elders' meeting for consideration. The central Elders will vote to confirm, delay, or reject each candidate's application for membership. Each candidate will be notified of the Elders' decision.
5. **Informing and Welcoming the New Members** After the Elders' affirmative vote, the new members will be informed of their standing as covenant members, welcomed into and introduced to the church family, and able to fully embrace both the privileges and responsibilities of covenant membership.

C. Removal from Church Membership

1. **Death:** In the event of the death of a member, the person's name will be removed from the membership rolls and that information will be included on the next month's Elder membership report.
2. **Request:** A member may request that his/her name be removed from membership rolls at any time. Such a request is to be made in writing and shall be considered at any regular Elders' meeting. Upon receiving this request, the Elders will ensure that the church will attempt to contact the person to secure their continuance in the fellowship. If the request is not withdrawn, it will be granted by the Elders.
3. **Joining another Southern Baptist church:** A member may obtain a letter of membership transfer to join another Southern Baptist church when they are in good standing as a covenant member. To assist members in fulfilling their covenant responsibilities, the letter will be issued when the request for it is received from the other church.
4. **Joining a non-Southern Baptist church:** When a member unites with a non-Southern Baptist church and information of that fact is confirmed by the Elders, the person's name will be removed from the membership roll.
5. **Inactivity, non-communication, and /or non-residency:** The church covenant describes a discipleship of active engagement with this local church.
 - 4.1. **A church member who is consistently unengaged** in worship, fellowship, or service for a year will be pursued for personal shepherding and care, and if there is no change in their involvement, may be removed from the church's membership upon action of the central Elders.
 - 4.2. **A church member whose move outside a reasonable driving distance from a church campus** inhibits regular involvement with the church family and ministry, and who after conversation give no indication of joining another church in their local area after a year, may be removed from the church's membership upon action of the central Elders.
 - 4.3. **Members in any special membership categories** such as those who are homebound or in nursing homes, in active military service, currently enrolled out-of-town college students, etc. will be exempt from these provisions.

D. Church Discipline, Reconciliation, and Restoration of Membership

- 1. Rationale:** If any member engages in un-Christian conduct, acts in opposition to the Articles of Faith, or violates their commitments to the Living Hope Church Covenant, it will be the Biblically mandated covenant responsibility of church members to engage with them to express accountability, call them to repentance, and pursue peacemaking and reconciliation. (Matt. 18:15-16, Gal. 6:1, 1 Cor. 6:1-7)
- 2. Process:** If, following the appeal of Christian brothers and sisters there is no change in the offending behaviors, it will be the duty of the campus Elders to pursue resolution and restoration in the most appropriate method(s) possible. (Matt. 18:16-20) The campus Elders will discuss with the offending member the nature and the effect of their conduct and labor with them in love and in truth to promote reconciliation. However, should such offenses continue, and the individual remain unrepentant, it will then be the duty of the campus Elders to prepare a written report of the reconciliation process with findings and recommendations for action to the central Elders. Among those actions, should it be deemed necessary, the central Elders may withdraw the privileges and/ or standing of membership from the person. Information about this final step of the discipline and reconciliation process will be made known to covenant members in the person's sphere of influence and others most affected by the offense, up to and including the entire congregation.
- 3. Restoration:** According to biblical teaching, the clear intention of any act of church discipline, including removal of membership, is to bring a fallen brother or sister to a place of repentance towards Christ and the church family and, eventually, restoration to membership and active service. Because there are many variables involved in each individual situation, as part of the restoration process the Elders will lay out an individualized course of action for disciplined members before they may be reinstated and allowed opportunities of service.

E. Church Participation

- 1. Active participation in the life, mission, and ministries of the church** as defined in the Living Hope Church Covenant is a vital part of authentic Christian discipleship and is expected of all covenant members unless they are providentially hindered.
- 2. Members' Meeting Participation & Voting Rights:** Each person who has been received into covenant membership (see Bylaw 1A&B above), is fulfilling their membership responsibilities as outlined in the Church Covenant and is not under discipline by the Elders (see Bylaw 1D above), may participate in Members' Meetings and vote on issues the Elders bring to the church for congregational action.

ARTICLE 2 - Church Officers

A. Biblical Offices

1. Elders

1.1. Qualifications: The Bible uses the words variously translated as “overseer”, “elder”, and /or “pastor” to describe the same key biblical office of the church. Those eligible to be ordained and serve as elders are men who meet the qualifications of personal credibility, Christ-like character, modeled faith, healthy family life, and spiritual maturity described in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9, Acts 20: 17-25, Hebrews 13:7 and 1 Peter 5:1-4.

All lay Elders shall have been covenant members of Living Hope Baptist Church for at least three years and actively involved in the ministries of the Church.

1.2. Descriptions

1.2.1. by compensation:

-lay Elders are those not in the employ of the church as a staff member and receive no compensation and/or salary for their service to the church.

-vocational Elders are those in the employ of the church as an ordained pastor and receive compensation and/or salary for their service to the church.

1.2.2. by sphere of oversight:

-campus Elders are called to serve the people and oversee all ministries of a specific Living Hope campus.

-central Elders: The Westen Campus Elders, along with up to two lay elders from each additional campus, will serve as central Elders to coordinate the work of the campus Elder bodies to ensure unity, communication, and accountability between the campus Elders. The Senior Pastor will be the only vocational elder among the Westen Campus and central Elder bodies.

1.3. Selection

1.3.1. Nominations for Elder shall be received from the Church membership upon notification from the central Elders that nominations are open. The nomination process will be coordinated to occur at the same time among all campuses. The covenant member making the nomination must be identified and permission should be obtained by the member from a nominee prior to the submission of their name for consideration. Campus Elders may be nominated only by members who participate in that Living Hope campus.

1.3.2. Nominees for Elder at a Living Hope campus will be examined and interviewed by the current Elders of that campus to determine their fitness to serve based on the qualifications in Bylaw 2-A1.1. All nominees who positively complete this examination and are unanimously affirmed by the central Elder body will enter initial Elder training.

1.3.3. A list of approved elder candidates for each campus of the Church will be presented to the Church body by announcement in a regular worship gathering and by printed and/or digital means on the same day. The Church membership will then have 28 days in which to raise concerns or show just cause as to why any of the candidates may be unqualified to serve.

It is expected that members will follow the Biblical obligation (Matt.18:15-16) and Church Covenant responsibility to address the concern with a candidate privately and personally. If the concern is not resolved, the member will then address the concern with the candidate and at least one other church member. If the concern is still not removed, the member may bring that concern to the central Elder body

who will investigate the concern and determine if that man's candidacy should proceed or be set aside.

1.3.4. Prior to the members' meeting for an affirmation vote, personal testimonies of salvation and one's sense of calling to the office of Elder will be shared with the respective campuses of the Church by elder candidates for that campus who have not served or been previously ordained. This will occur in a worship gathering and/or by video distributed to the church family.

1.3.5. On or after the 28th-day of the 28-day period mentioned in 1.3.3. and the completion of initial Elder training, the names of approved Elder candidates will be brought to a Living Hope members' meeting for a vote at each campus on the same day. All candidates must receive three-fourths of the votes cast from that campus to serve.

1.3.6. Upon approval by the Church, those men not previously ordained will be ordained as Elders of Living Hope Baptist Church.

1.4. Term of Service

1.4.1. Elders will be elected to serve for a three-year term. If approved by the members at a campus an elder may serve up to another three-year term. At the conclusion of six consecutive years of service, the Elder must take at least a one-year sabbatical before being eligible to serve again. The Senior Pastor will remain a central Elder while he serves as Pastor and will not be voted on each three years.

1.4.2. While an elder serves a term, he is considered an active elder. When an elder takes sabbatical or cannot serve a term for other reasons, he remains an elder of the Church but is considered an inactive (non-voting) elder.

1.5. The Number & Composition of the Elder Body

1.5.1. The central Elder body will determine the number of active campus Elders needed for the wise and effective oversight, shepherding, and protection of the Church and her members.

1.5.2. Each campus Elder body will be composed of a minimum of three Elders, consisting of a vocational elder (the campus pastor) and two lay elders. In the absence of this minimum number, the central Elder body may assign elders to serve in leadership with that campus until elders can be developed to serve.

1.5.3. All Elder bodies will maintain a simple majority of lay Elders.

1.6. Duties

The duties and responsibilities of Elders fall into four large categories drawn from the key passages in Scripture regarding elder leadership: 1 Timothy 3:1-7. Titus 1:6-9, Hebrews 13:7, 1 Peter 5:1-4, and Acts 20:17-25.

1.6.1. overseeing and leading: Elders are to guide the Church in all aspects of the living out of its God-given mission, including the development of the overall vision and values of the Church, along with strategies for pursuing the Church's mission.

The Elders are ex-officio members of and are ultimately responsible for ministry teams, committees, boards, and any group that is charged with carrying out the ministry of the church. Elders oversee the administrative details of each campus managing the ministry budget (including recommendations to the Church for the acquisition and disposition of real property). They also give themselves to

encouraging volunteers and engaging with ministry staff development by participating in the ongoing review of staff work and health.

The central Elders give final approval for the creation of all pastoral/ ministerial positions and recommendation to the church of specific candidates for them.

The Westen Campus Elders serve as the Directors of the Church in its legal entity as a corporation. According to Article 7B of the Living Hope Baptist Church Constitution, the Annual Meeting of the Westen Campus Elders functioning as Directors of the Corporation shall take place on the third Monday of June of each fiscal year. The central Elders shall have the authority to adjust this date within that month as long as the Annual Meeting occurs prior to the beginning of the Church's fiscal year.

1.6.2. shepherding and praying: Elders are to watch over, love, and care for the Church as the flock God has entrusted to them. They will regularly pray for the Church members and be available to pray for members and others at the conclusion of Sunday services or by request (James 5:14). They will respond to any communication from Church members or staff in a timely manner and engage in personal conversation as needed. This also includes specific responsibilities in the processes of Biblical peacemaking outlined in Bylaw 1D.

1.6.3. teaching and protecting: Elders are to assure the doctrinal purity and unity of the Church. Individual elders must know the doctrine and teaching of the Church (The Articles of Faith) and be able to teach and engage members theologically. As a body, the Elders must be theologically astute, biblically articulate, and ready to instruct individuals or groups as the need arises. As required, the central Elder body may issue position papers that will seek to explain a given doctrine and its application at Living Hope Baptist Church. The central Elders must be aware of teaching within the church (including a regular review of the teaching menu of the pastors and discipleship leaders for doctrine and balance) and are to expose any teaching that is false or deceitful. (Titus 1:9, I John 4:5-6, Jude 3-4) Likewise, Elders must stand firm against divisiveness and promote unity and harmony within the church body. (John 17:21-23, Eph. 4:3)

1.6.4. modeling and demonstrating: Elders are to live as examples of life in the way of Jesus in their individual and collective speech, actions, attitudes, relationships, and interactions. This includes faithful engagement with all aspects of the Disciple's Life. Elders are to be disciples after which any disciple can pattern their life. (Heb.13:17, 1 Peter 5:3)

1.7. Elder Meetings

1.7.1. The central Elders and each campus Elder body may organize themselves as needed to accomplish their work, including the designation of officers and both the frequency and nature of their meetings. All campus Elder bodies will meet monthly, or more frequently if needed to pray for the Church and consider matters that impact the life and health of that campus.

1.7.2. Items for a campus or central Elders' meeting agenda may come from the Elders themselves; from church members who bring questions or concerns to the Elders; from standing committees or ministries; and/or from Living Hope pastors and ministers.

1.7.3. A quorum is required for voting matters. A proper quorum is defined as 75% of the central Elders and of Elder bodies of 5 or more. Elder bodies of 4 or less require 100% participation for a quorum.

- 1.7.4. Any meeting may be held by conference call, video-conferencing, or similar technology as long as a quorum of the Elders participating in the meeting can hear one another. All Elders participating shall be deemed present at such meetings.
- 1.7.5. Any vote may be taken in person, by email, text, or other digital means and over a duration of time that the Elders in the quorum may agree on.
- 1.7.6. Within any Elders' meeting, thoughtful, vigorous, and respectful discussion is expected on the issues presented, with all elders participating as equal partners in discussion and decision-making. With any vote or action, the heart is that all decisions be unanimous, although decisions may be approved by at least a 2/3rds majority of all eligible voting elders. The only exception to this is the recommendation of an elder (Bylaw 2A-1.3.2.) and the removal of an elder (Bylaw 2A-1.8.3.)
- 1.7.7. Minutes: All Elder bodies will keep careful minutes of their meeting agendas and actions, though not details of their deliberations. These minutes will be kept in digital formats by the Office of the Senior Pastor.

1.8. Vacancies, Resignation and/or Removal, and Emeritus Status

- 1.8.1. A **vacancy** in an Elder body because of death, resignation, removal or any other cause shall be filled as they occur. They may be filled either by the central Elder body asking an inactive elder to step in and fill the unexpired term or in the manner prescribed in Bylaw 2A-1.3. In the event that a vacancy causes an Elder body to have less than three active Elders, the central Elders will assign elders to take on the Elder responsibilities for that campus.
- 1.8.2. Elders may opt to **resign** before the completion of their term should their life circumstances change (vocationally, physically, relationally, or spiritually). A notice of resignation must be presented in writing to the campus elders. After being received, then accepted by the campus elders and affirmed by the central elders, the resignation will be announced to the Church.
- 1.8.3. An Elder may be **removed** from service for a valid cause (violation of the Church Covenant, actions, or teachings inconsistent with the Articles of Faith, and/or failure to fulfill the duties of an Elder outlined in Bylaw Article 2A-1.6) by the unanimous decision of the central Elders upon the recommendation of the campus Elders. The discipline of an Elder shall be consistent with the standards established for all covenant members in Bylaw 1D, which include an Elder-led investigation of any charges. A written notice of the proposed removal of any Elder shall be given to that Elder at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting of the campus Elders at which an action to effectuate such removal is to be taken. The Elder will be given a reasonable opportunity to defend himself at that meeting. However, the Elder shall not be present nor participate during the deliberation and vote on his removal. The Elder under consideration for removal shall not participate in any Elder activities while such removal is considered.
- 1.8.4. An Elder who has served faithfully, wisely, and well, but due to age or other significant factors is no longer able to serve an active term, may be named an **Elder emeritus**. Such a designation will be granted by the central Elder body of Living Hope upon the recommendation of the campus Elder body with whom the Elder has served and announced to the entire Church family with expressions of gratitude to God and encouragement to rightly honor such men.

2. Senior Pastor

- 2.1. **Definition:** The Senior Pastor is a vocational elder (see Bylaw 2A1.1-1.2) who will

serve along with lay elders as part of the central Elder body of Living Hope Baptist Church. The Senior Pastor will be the only vocational Elder on the central Elder body.

2.2. Responsibilities: The Senior Pastor is responsible to serve as the leader of the Church in its life and mission. In the pursuit of those goals, he will pray; love the people; model life in the way of Jesus; cast vision for the congregation; preach Bible-based messages that lead people to Christ and equip God's people to live godly lives and participate in the work of ministry; express and encourage pastoral care; and lead and develop the pastors, ministers, and staff of the Church.

2.3. Selection Process: When a vacancy in the office of Senior Pastor occurs...

- 2.3.1.** The central Elders will select an Interim Pastor to serve until a Senior Pastor is secured.
- 2.3.2.** The Church will be invited to nominate persons to serve as a Senior Pastor Search Team. This announcement will give a beginning and ending date for submissions and include the qualifications and composition of the team. All potential Search Team members shall have been an active covenant member of the Church in good standing for at least three years. The team will be comprised of seven members: four men and three women; two active central Elders and five other persons. (Only one member from each household may serve)
- 2.3.3.** All nominations will be submitted by the final submittal date in writing by physical or digital forms provided by the church. The covenant member making the nomination should secure the permission of the covenant member to be nominated prior to submission. There is no limit to the number of persons any one member may nominate.
- 2.3.4.** All nominees will be reviewed by the central Elders and those who meet the basic qualification in 2.3.2. will be presented to the Church for a final affirmation vote.
- 2.3.5.** An announcement of the members' meeting for the affirmation vote for the Search Team will be made according to the requirements stated in Article 7B of the Living Hope Constitution. The vote shall be by individual ballot. The ballot for the vote will include the names of all nominees in three categories: active central Elders, additional men, and women. Any member may vote for two active Elders, two additional men, and three women. Any ballot that exceeds the set number of votes in any category will be invalidated.
- 2.3.6.** The two active Elders, two additional men, and three women receiving the most votes in their category will comprise the Senior Pastor Search Team. In the event of a tie in any category, a run-off ballot will be presented on the following Sunday.
- 2.3.7.** The Senior Pastor Search Team will organize and pursue their work prayerfully and independently. They will involve the Church membership in the process as necessary and communicate regularly with the Elders and the Church. Discussions with potential candidates will include careful consideration of the candidate's views on Living Hope's governing documents -- the Constitution, Articles of Faith, Church Covenant, and Bylaws -- to ensure his joyful and willing commitment to them.
- 2.3.8.** After the Senior Pastor Search Team has unanimously approved a potential candidate, and the candidate has been reviewed and approved by the central Elders, the candidate will be introduced to the Church. Information will be

provided by physical and/or digital means. Opportunities will be provided for Church members to interact with the Senior Pastor candidate and his family, and to hear him preach.

2.3.9. An announcement of a special members' meeting for the purpose of voting to extend a call to the Senior Pastor candidate will be made according to the requirements stated in Article 7B of the Living Hope Constitution. The timeline of the introductory weekend and the vote will be determined by the central Elders. The vote shall be by individual ballot. An affirmative vote of 90% of the votes cast by the covenant members participating will be necessary to affirm the candidate and extend the call to serve the Church.

2.4. Tenure: The Senior Pastor, thus called by the Church, will serve at the mutual pleasure of the Senior Pastor and the Church, each pledging to prayerfully love and support one another in Christ.

2.4.1. Resignation: If at any time a Senior Pastor should sense a call to leave this service, he will give the Elders notice of four weeks and the Church two weeks prior to leaving his post.

2.4.2. Allegations of Misconduct: If at any time, the Church and /or Elders become aware of an allegation that a Senior Pastor has conducted himself in any manner which discredits his office or brings the Church into disgrace, the Elders shall investigate this behavior in accordance with the Scripture's description of an Elder's character and the call for peace-making in conflict. This investigation may result in a) exoneration; b) disciplinary action, up to and including a call for his resignation; or c) recommendation for the Church to act on a motion for his dismissal.

3. Other Pastors and Ministers

3.1. Development of Positions: The central Elders shall have authority to determine the number and nature of positions for pastors and ministers on the Living Hope ministry staff at any campus. These positions will be necessary to help the Church be faithful to "equip the saints for the work of ministry" (Eph.4:11-12) in response to ministry growth, needs of the Body, or the Lord's leadership into a new or unique ministry opportunity.

3.2. Descriptions

3.2.1. Pastors are men who are ordained and serve the Church as vocational elders (see Bylaw 2A-1.2.1)

3.2.2. Ministers are men and women trained and licensed by the Church (or by a church that shares Living Hope's doctrine and practice) to serve in a particular area of ministry.

3.3. Qualifications

3.3.1. All Pastors and Ministers shall give evidence of deep spiritual maturity, Christ-like character, genuine love for others, personal integrity, family health, specific calling to ministry, and ministry faithfulness. (See 1 Tim. 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-11, Eph.4:11-12, 1 Peter 5:1-5)

3.3.2. The unique competencies required for each ministry area will be defined by the central Elders as part of the process of creating and defining the Pastoral / Ministerial position.

3.3.3. Pastors shall be ordained by Living Hope or by another church that shares Living Hope's doctrine and practice. Ministers licensed by the Church will receive either

Living Hope's global ministry license (an ongoing ministerial credential that may be presented to other churches) or local ministry license (a limited ministry credential that applies only to the time one is engaged in ministry with and through Living Hope.)

3.4. Selection and Calling by the Church

3.4.1. Interim: When a vacancy occurs in the leadership of a ministry, the central Elders may select an interim Pastor or Minister to lead a ministry area until a new Pastor or Minister is called.

3.4.2. Process for Selection: The central Elders shall determine the specific process for the search and selection of each Pastor or Minister. This may include the development of a team to search outside the church; recognizing the giftedness and calling of someone within the church; dealing with a specific individual that appears uniquely gifted to meet a ministry need, etc.

3.4.3. Recommendation of a Candidate: Once a final candidate has been identified, the Church will be notified by the central Elders of a recommendation that the Church extend a call to that person. The candidate's information (family, experience, etc.) will be shared with the appropriate campus by printed and /or digital means. The candidate will also give testimony to their faith and calling in a worship gathering at the appropriate campus(es), which will be recorded and shared by digital means. The central Elders will also organize a way for the candidate to meet with the members and ministries he or she will potentially serve.

3.4.4. Members' Meeting to Extend a Call: Since a Pastor or Minister may only be called to serve by action of the Church, a member's meeting of the appropriate campus will be announced for the purpose of members acting on the recommendation to extend a call to the candidate. An announcement of a special members' meeting for the purpose of voting to extend a call to the Pastor / Minister candidate will be made according to the requirements stated in Article 7B of the Living Hope Constitution. The Church's vote to affirm the Pastor or Minister candidate will be by individual ballot. An affirmative vote of 90% of the votes cast by the members participating will be necessary to affirm the candidate and extend the call to serve the Church.

3.5. Tenure: The Pastor or Minister, thus called by the Church, will serve at the mutual pleasure of the Pastor and/or Minister and the church, each pledging to prayerfully love and support the other in Christ.

3.5.1. Reassignment or Adjustment of Duties: At any point after the Church has extended a call to the individual, the central Elders may, in prayerful conversation with the Pastor or Minister, reassign or adjust the duties of a Pastor or Minister based on the needs of any ministry of the Church.

3.5.2. Resignation: If at any time a Pastor or Minister should sense a call to leave this service, he or she will give the Elders notice of at least four weeks and the Church two weeks prior to leaving his or her post.

3.5.3. Allegations of Misconduct: If at any time, the Church and /or Elders become aware that a Pastor or Minister has conducted him-or-herself in any way which violates the church covenant, leaves ministry duties unfulfilled, and/or brings the Church into disgrace, the Elders shall investigate this behavior in accordance with the Scripture's description of pastor or minister's character and the call for peace-making in conflict. As a result of this investigation, the Elders may initiate a variety of responses up to and including termination.

4. Deacons

4.1. Qualifications: Those eligible to be ordained and serve as Deacons are men, at least 22 years old, who have been a covenant church member of Living Hope in good standing for at least one year. The candidate must exemplify the qualities of personal character, spiritual maturity, trustworthy reputation, a healthy family life, and a commitment to church unity prescribed for deacons in Acts 6:3 and I Timothy 3:8-13.

4.2. Number of the Deacon Body: It is expected that each campus will establish a deacon body. In consultation with the Elders of each campus, each Deacon body will then establish the number of active Deacons to serve each campus at a given time.

4.3. Selection

4.3.1. The Church will be notified that the Deacon nomination period has begun, and when it will end. The nomination process will be coordinated to occur at the same time among all campuses.

4.3.2. Nominations of men to serve as Deacon will be received from Church members only. Nominations will be submitted in writing, using physical and /or digital forms provided through the Church. These forms must be received by the final submittal date to be considered. There will be no limit to the number of nominees a member may submit.

4.3.3. Every name submitted will be considered by the Deacons. After this initial review, those who do not meet the qualifications above (Bylaw 2A-4.1) will be removed from consideration. Those nominees who remain will advance to the next step of the process.

4.3.4. Those nominees will be contacted to confirm their willingness to have their name submitted to the Church as Deacon candidates.

4.3.5. These nominees will then be queried as to their fitness to serve as Deacons. This examination will take the form of a written survey of doctrine, giftedness, and desire to serve, along with an interview conducted by representative deacons and Elders. Following this examination, nominees approved by the current Deacons will then be presented to the Church as Deacon candidates.

4.3.6. An announcement of a members' meeting for the purpose of acting to affirm Deacon candidates will be made according to the requirements stated in Article 7B of the Living Hope Constitution. At that time, the list of Deacon candidates will be presented to the Church for congregational reflection and prayer.

4.3.7. Deacon candidates will be selected and affirmed to serve by a majority vote of the Church members voting.

4.3.8. Those Deacons who have not previously been ordained will be ordained by the Church and then trained for their work.

4.4. Term of Service and Vacancies

4.4.1. The term of service for a Deacon will be three years. Unless approved by the Deacon body and the Church to serve an additional year, when that Deacon's term of service has expired, he will be inactive and ineligible to serve with the Deacon body until one year has lapsed.

4.4.2. Vacancies in the Deacon body may occur by resignation, death, or removal by Church discipline. Such vacancies may be filled by the Deacon body from those who have

already served as Deacons of Living Hope. Such Deacons will serve out the unexpired term of service and will be eligible for the next election.

4.5. Duties

4.5.1. Deacons will minister to the physical and practical needs of Church members. This will include, but not be limited to, care for widows, care in times of bereavement and hospitalization. The spirit of servanthood should mark every aspect of the ministry of Deacons.

4.5.2. Deacons prepare and serve the elements of the Lord's Supper when that ordinance is scheduled to be observed in a worship gathering.

B. Other Officers

1. Trustees

1.1. Description: The Trustees serve as advisors to and under the authority of the Elders, in issues related to the property and finances of the Church at all campuses.

1.2. Qualifications: A person who serves as a Trustee shall have been an active covenant member of the Church for at least three years prior to beginning a term. They shall be a mature Christian who actively supports the Church with tithes and offerings.

1.3. Number and Term of Service: There will be five Trustees, who will each serve a three-year term. The terms will coincide with the church's fiscal year, from July to June, and are staggered on a rotating basis. A trustee's term may be extended (with central Elder approval) if the individual is part of a negotiation and their removal is deemed to be detrimental to the negotiations. This latter provision will not prevent newly elected Trustees from entering upon their respective terms of office. After serving a three-year term, a person will be ineligible to serve as a Trustee until one year has lapsed.

1.4. Selection and Vacancies:

1.4.1. Selection: As Trustee terms expire, the Trustees may recommend to the central Elders a person or persons for consideration to fill the seat(s) no later than the April Elders' meeting. Upon central Elder approval, the incoming Trustee(s) should attend subsequent Trustee meetings prior to the start of their term in order to get acclimated to their responsibilities. During this preliminary term, input can be provided by the incoming Trustees, but they will not have voting authority until the beginning of their term.

1.4.2. Vacancies that occur during the year, or before a term expires, will be filled for the remainder of that Trustee's term in a manner consistent with Bylaw 2B1.4.1.at a regular monthly central Elders' meeting.

1.5. Duties and Responsibilities

1.5.1. Property: Trustees will have general charge for the care of the grounds, buildings, and assets of the Church. They will periodically review property and facility needs with the Elders for the purpose of planning for future ministry. The Trustees may only buy or sell real property/real estate upon approval of the Church (see Constitution, Article 6B-1) and may only mortgage, lease, or transfer property with the express authorization of the central Elders. Trustees will advise in all legal transactions pertaining to assets and property.

1.5.2. Finance: The Trustees will serve as a general finance committee for the Church. They are responsible for developing the Living Hope Financial Policies and Procedures, which the central Elders approve and the church staff implements. They will advise in matters of insurance, budget planning, and accounting practices.

Additionally, they will receive and approve an audit report from an outside auditing firm whenever one is deemed necessary during the budgeting process or is required by loan documents or a governmental agency. The Trustees will organize themselves as they deem best for this part of their work, calling to their assistance other members of the church as they see fit.

- Planning for the yearly ministry budget will be guided by a Budget Planning Team composed of the Elders, Trustees, Personnel Committee Chair, Church Administrator, Controller / Treasurer, and other pertinent staff as deemed necessary by the committee.

1.5.3. Access to Records: All books, records, and accounts kept by the Treasurer will be open to inspection by any covenant member of the church by formal written request to the Trustees. The books and records open to inspection will not include the records of contributions by individuals or church staff salary information (the latter of which is available only by formal written request to the Personnel Committee, see Article 2B-5). Furthermore, only the following people will have access to financial contributions by individuals: Elders, Accounting Assistant, Treasurer (Controller), Trustees, and others only with permission of the central Elders.

2. Moderator and Assistant Moderator

The Moderator and Assistant Moderator will be elected annually by the central Elders to conduct the meeting when the Church is assembled for a members' meeting. In the absence of the Moderator, the Assistant Moderator will preside. If neither of these are present, or in special circumstances and as determined by the central Elders, any officer named in these by-laws may call the Church to order and lead the meeting.

3. Clerk

3.1. Description: The clerk is an employee of the Church, either a Pastor or an employee overseen by a Pastor, as designated by the Elders.

3.2. Responsibilities:

3.2.1. Members' Meetings: The Clerk will keep suitable and up-to-date records of all the actions of the church in members' meetings. All records of the clerk will be considered the property of the Church.

3.2.2. Membership

-The Clerk will keep a membership register recording the names of members, with their dates of admission, removal, or death, together with a record of baptisms.

-The Clerk will prepare a membership report for the monthly Elders' meeting to enable Elder action on those who are seeking covenant membership with Living Hope or are choosing to leave the Church.

-The Clerk will request church membership letters from Southern Baptist churches when a member joins this Church and will forward letters of dismissal from Living Hope to other Southern Baptist churches.

4. Treasurer (Controller)

4.1. Description: The Treasurer (or Controller) of the church is an employee of the church. He or she has an advisory role with the Trustees.

4.2. Responsibilities: are detailed in the job description for the Controller as defined by the central Elders.

4.3. Reporting and Access to Records:

- The Treasurer shall render to the Trustees at each of their regular meetings a detailed itemized report of receipts and disbursements for the preceding month. This report will also be provided to the Elders and made available for review by covenant members of the Church, upon written request.
- The Treasurer shall assist the Trustees in providing covenant member access to financial records as detailed in Bylaw 2B-1.5.

5. Personnel Committee

5.1. Description: The Personnel Committee advises and assists the Elders in the development and administration of the church's ministerial team and staff.

5.2. Qualifications: A person who serves as a member of the Personnel Committee shall have been an active covenant member of the Church for at least three years prior to beginning a term. They shall be a mature Christian who actively support the Church with tithes and offerings.

5.3. Number and Term of Service: The Personnel Committee shall consist of five people, each serving a three-year term. The terms will coincide with the church's fiscal year, from July to June, and are staggered on a rotating basis. After serving a three-year term, a person will be ineligible to serve on the Personnel Committee until one year has lapsed.

5.4. Selection and Vacancies: The Personnel Committee may recommend a person for each expiring term in the April central Elders' meeting. Upon approval by the central Elders, that person will begin a term of service. Vacancies that occur during the year will be filled in like manner at a regular central Elder's meeting.

5.5. Responsibilities

5.5.1. In consultation with the campus and /or central Elders, assess the need for new ministerial team and non-ministerial staff positions, and make recommendations to the central Elders for the establishment of such positions.

5.5.2. Help draft job descriptions.

5.5.3. Research and propose compensation for each position, including salary and any additional benefits appropriate to that position. This task includes the regular analysis of benefit issues such as insurance, retirement, etc.

5.5.4. Present any proposed adjustments in compensation to the Budget Planning Team in its annual deliberations. Between the annual meetings of the Budget Planning Team, the Personnel Committee will direct compensation issues to the Trustees.

5.5.5. Respond to grant or deny the written request of a covenant member to access and inspect individual church staff salary information.

5.5.6. When requested by the central Elders, assist with, or conduct the search process for a position.

5.5.7. Under the authority of the central Elders, develop and maintain the policies and procedures of the Living Hope Personnel Handbook.

C. Staff Members and Other Employees

1. Establishment of Positions: The Personnel Committee will have the responsibility to recommend to the central Elders the establishment of new ministerial or non-ministerial staff positions. (See Bylaw 2B-5) This recommendation will include a job description outlining the responsibilities for

the new position, proposed beginning salary, and a description of any additional benefits. The position is established upon final approval by the central Elders.

- 2. Calling and Hiring:** All pastors and ministers will be brought to the central Elders for final approval and then to the Church body for a vote affirming their call to serve, according to Bylaw 2A-3.4. All other staff and employees may be secured by the Personnel Committee through procedures approved by the central Elders.
- 3. Supervision:** All employees – ministerial and non-ministerial – work under the authority of the Elders. The Senior Pastor and Elders, acting for the Church, supervise all employees either directly or indirectly through processes and supervisory relationships established by the Personnel Committee. At the time of employment, all employees will be responsible to the terms of the job description for their position; the policies and procedures of the Living Hope Employee Handbook; and the governing documents of Living Hope Baptist Church.

ARTICLE 3: Boards and Committees / Teams

A. Creation and/or Dissolution: The central Elders have the authority to create and/or dissolve any boards and committees / teams they deem necessary for the pursuit and fulfillment of the mission of the Church.

B. Descriptions

1. **Boards** assist with the ongoing administration and direction of individual ministry areas. The central Elders will determine which ministry areas require a board. Boards are distinct from the ordinary organizational operations of ministries.
2. **Committees / Teams** may be formed for the accomplishment of a specific assignment or task and will dissolve when that task is accomplished. (The Personnel Committee is a standing committee acting as a Church Officer and is distinct from this provision. See Article 2B-5)

C. Qualifications: All board members shall have been active covenant members of the Church for at least three years. Members of committees / teams must be active covenant members of the Church.

D. Selection

1. **For boards:** The pastor or minister serving in that ministry area, in consultation with the central Elders, will recommend persons to serve on the Board. The central Elders will give final approval to all Board members. The Church will be notified of the composition of Boards at the beginning of each fiscal year.
2. **For committees / teams:** Campus Elders, in consultation with ministerial staff, will determine the covenant members who will be requested to serve. If deemed necessary because of the issue being addressed, the Church will be notified of the committee / team's assignment and its membership.

E. Number, Composition, and Terms of Service

1. **Number:** Boards and committees / teams will consist of three, five, or seven persons.
2. **Composition:** All boards and committees / teams will have at least one active lay Elder or a vocational Elder as a member.
3. **Terms of Service:**
 - 3.1. **Board members** may serve up to a 5-year term before taking a year of sabbatical from official Board duties. After a one-year break, they may be recommended to serve on the Board for another term. Terms shall be staggered to maintain continuity of leadership and experience for the ministry. The central Elders shall approve the pattern of the staggered terms.
 - 3.2. **Committee / team members** serve until the task or project assigned by the central Elders is completed and the committee / team is dissolved.

F. Operation

1. **Organization:** Boards and committees/teams may organize themselves (frequency of meetings, etc.) in the way that best accomplishes the goals of their ministry or assigned task.
2. **Records:** Boards will maintain some permanent record of meetings & decisions. Such records shall be submitted to the Elders monthly. Committees will regularly update the central Elders on the progress with their assigned task and present to them a final report in writing when the task is completed.
3. **Finances:**
 - 3.1. **Boards** will be financed through the Church budget provisions for the individual ministry area they serve.

3.2. Committees / teams: The central Elders, in consultation with the Trustees, will ensure the provision of any funding needed for the work of the committee or team.

4. Supervision: Boards are under the direction of the Minister or Pastor in the ministry area to which they are assigned. Committees are under the direction of the active Elder on their team.

ARTICLE 4: Operating Policies, Procedures, and Standards

- A. Creation and Development:** The central Elders shall have the authority to develop and establish all policies, procedures and standards deemed necessary to ensure the Church's effective Gospel ministry, faithful public testimony, and loving unity. They may include other covenant church members in the development process. All such policies, procedures, and standards will be consistent with and never supersede the governing documents of Living Hope Baptist Church.
- B. Implementation and Communication**
1. Official statements of Living Hope policy, procedure, and/ or standards become effective immediately when approved by the central Elders. They will be clearly communicated to the appropriate ministry area and / or groups to which they apply, including the entire Church.
 2. These statements apply to all ministries and operations at all Living Hope campuses. Ministry staff, volunteers, boards, and committees / teams are responsible for implementing and operating by them.
 3. All statements of policies, procedures, and standards are available for covenant members to review at any time by request of a Pastoral / Ministerial staff member or Elder.
- C. Oversight:** The Elders will maintain an up-to-date record / master list of all active policies, procedures, and standards. It is the responsibility of the Elders to ensure the policies, procedures, or standards are followed. Specific responsibilities for implementation may be assigned to individual Church Officers, boards, or ministries.
- D. Revision:** All Living Hope policies, procedures and / or standards shall be regularly reviewed and may be revised.
1. The central Elder body may revise these documents or receive recommendations for revision from a campus Elder body, a pastor or minister, the Trustees, Personnel Committee, or a ministry Board. The central Elders will consider the proposed revision and may vote to either reject or implement it.
 2. Once a revision is approved by the central Elders, the amended policy, procedure, and /or standard becomes Living Hope's official stance in that area.

ARTICLE 5: Revision Procedure for Governing Documents

A. Permission: Any of the governing documents of Living Hope Baptist Church (the Constitution, The Articles of Faith, the Church Covenant, and the Bylaws) may be revised by action of the covenant members of the Church.

B. Process

1. The central Elder body may propose revisions to these documents themselves or receive proposals for revision from Church Officers or covenant members. The central Elders will prayerfully consider any proposals at a meeting of the central Elders and will vote whether to recommend a specific proposed revision be considered by the Church.
2. The specific proposed revision will be distributed to the Church in writing at a regular worship gathering at all campuses and / or by digital means at least twenty-eight (28) days in advance of a members' meeting announced for the purpose of acting on it. With the announcement, the central Elders will also specify the means (physical, digital, etc.) and duration of voting.
3. An open forum for discussion of the proposed revision will be held at least one week prior to the members' meeting in which a vote will take place.
4. An affirmative vote of 75% of the votes cast by the covenant members participating in the members' meeting will be necessary to affirm the revision.

C. Implementation: The governing document(s), thus revised, will be effective immediately, and carry authority over the members, ministries, and operations of the Church.

Policy Control Page

Policy Title: LHBC Covenant, By-Laws, and Constitution

Policy Revised: addition of Article XIV

Date Approved: 6/14/2015

Submitted By: Elders

Policy Revised: Amend by-law article 1 section 2

Date Approved: 6/14/2015

Submitted By: Elders

Policy Revised: Amend by-law article 2 section 5

Date Approved: 6/14/2015

Submitted By: Elders

Policy Revised: Amend Articles of Faith

Date Approved: 02/21/21

Submitted by: Elders

Policy Revised: Amend Church Covenant

Date Approved: 03/30/21

Submitted by: Elders