

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.