

LIVINGHOPE

BIBLE CHURCH

“Growing and Changing in Christ”

CONSTITUTION
CONFESSION OF FAITH
CHURCH COVENANT

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to

*be born again to a **LIVING HOPE***
through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...”

1 PETER 1:3

FLOWCHART FOR VISION AND MINISTRY

VISION STATEMENT

We exist to glorify God by bringing people to Jesus and membership in His family, helping them to grow and change in Christlike maturity, and equipping them for service to God in the local church and in mission to the world.



Christ, our Head & Shepherd

Col. 1:18

The Body of Christ

Acts 2:42-47

Under-shepherds (Council of Elders)- Ephesians 4:11-12

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Knowing Christ

Coming to Repentant Faith/ New Life in Christ
New Believer's Classes
Biblical Counseling Ministry
LIFE Groups
Men's Prayer Breakfast
Ladies' Prayer Fellowship
New Member's Class

Worshipping Christ

Personal Walk with Christ
Music ministries – (choir, orchestra, worship team)
Special music-solos, groups
Public Scripture Reading
Lord's Table / Baptism
Receiving the Word and Living it!

Growing in Discipleship

Multiple Adult Sunday School Classes
Children's Sunday School for All Ages
Midweek Kids 4 Truth Children's Program
Family Focused Youth Ministry
Men's and Women's Bible Studies
Men's and Women's Mentoring Groups
Tract, Library, and Bookstore Ministries

Sharing My Faith (Evangelism)

Visitation & Evangelism Teams
Nursing Home Ministry
Spanish Ministries, Church Planting
Worldwide Missions
Vacation Bible School
Community Outreach Sundays
Free Counseling Ministry for the Community

Encouraging with Fellowship

Sunday School
Morning Worship
Evening Bible Study
Prayer Meetings
Bible & Missions Conferences
Special Meetings (Church Picnic, Christmas Luncheon)

Edifying Others with My Service

Deacon Ministries
Ushers / Greeters
Meals for the Sick / Praying for the Sick
Homeless Shelter Ministry
Church Work Days
Nursery Ministry
Multimedia (web site, sound, video)

My Faith = Coming to a broken and repentant assurance of God's love for me through the Cross of Christ

My Fellowship = I commit to meet regularly to encourage my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ

My Discipleship = I want to grow and change in Christ through applying God's Word to my life in private study and in mentoring relationships

My Service = I commit to serve Christ in His local church through my gifting by the Holy Spirit

My Evangelism = that those far from God might receive Jesus Christ as Lord

My Worship = and that we all might magnify His Name in all things and through our corporate worship.

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ARTICLE 1

Organization

The name of this Church shall be "Living Hope Bible Church" of Roselle, Illinois and "Iglesia Esperanza" (Spanish ministry).

ARTICLE 2

Vision Statement

Living Hope Bible Church exists to glorify God by bringing people to Jesus and membership in His family, helping them to grow and change in Christlike maturity, and equipping them for service to God in the local church and in mission to the world.

ARTICLE 3

Confession of Faith

The following summary of our faith is adapted from the New Hampshire Confession of Faith of 1833.

1. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit, and is the perfect treasure of heavenly instruction (1); that it has God for its author, salvation for its end (2), and truth without any mixture of error for its matter (3); that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us (4); and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union (5), and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried (6).

1. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Sam. 23:2; Acts 1:16; 3:21; John 10:35; Luke 16:29-31; Psa. 119:11; Rom. 3:1-2
2. 2 Tim. 3:15; 1 Pet. 1:10-12; Acts 11:14; Rom. 1:16; Mark 16:16; John 5:38-39
3. Prov. 30:5-6; John 17:17; Rev. 22:18-19; Rom. 3:4
4. Rom. 2:12; John 12:47-48; 1 Cor. 4:3-4; Luke 10:10-16; 12:47-48
5. Phil. 3:16; Eph. 4:3-6; Phil. 2:1-2; 1 Cor. 1:10; 1 Pet. 4:11
6. 1 John 4:1; Isa. 8:20; 1 Thess. 5:21; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:6; Jude 3:5; Eph. 6:17; Psa. 119:59-60; Phil. 1:9-11

2. Of the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of heaven and earth (1); inexpressibly glorious in holiness (2), and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love (3); that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost (4); equal in every divine perfection (5), and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption (6).

1. John 4:24; Psa. 147:5; 83:18; Heb. 3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:10
2. Exod. 15:11; Isa. 6:3; 1 Pet. 1:15-16; Rev. 4:6-8
3. Mark 12:30; Rev. 4:11; Matt. 10:37; Jer. 2:12-13
4. Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:4-6; 1 John 5:7
5. John 10:30; 5:17; 14:23; 17:5, 10; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Cor. 2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6
6. Eph. 2:18; 2 Cor. 13:14; Rev. 1:4-5; comp. 2, 7

3. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker (1); but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state (2); in consequence of which all people are now sinners (3), not by constraint, but choice (4); being by nature utterly void of that holiness

required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin (5), without defense or excuse (6).

1. Gen. 1:27, 31; Eccl. 7:29; Acts 16:26; Gen. 2:16
2. Gen. 3:6-24; Rom. 5:12
3. Rom. 5:19; John 3:6; Psa. 51:5; Rom. 5:15-19; 8:7
4. Isa. 53:6; Gen. 6:12; Rom. 3:9-18
5. Eph. 2:1-3; Rom. 1:18,32; 2:1-16; Gal. 3:10; Matt. 20:15
6. Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom. 1:20; 3:19; Gal. 3:22

4. Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace (1), through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God (2); who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin (3); honored the divine law by his personal obedience (4), and by his death made a full atonement for our sins (5); that having risen from the death, he is now enthroned in heaven (5); and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior (7).

1. Eph. 2:5; Matt. 18:11; 1 John 4:10; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; Acts 15:11
2. John 3:16; 1:1-14; Heb. 4:14; 12:24
3. Phil. 2:6-7; Heb. 2:9, 14; 2 Cor. 5:21
4. Isa. 42:21; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 4:4-5; Rom. 3:21
5. Isa. 53:4-5; Matt. 20:28; Rom. 4:25; 3:21-26; 1 John 4:10; 2:2; 1 Cor. 15:1-3; Heb. 9:13-15
6. Heb. 1:8, 3; 8:1; Col. 3:1-4
7. Heb. 7:25; Col. 2:9; Heb. 2:18; 7:26; Psa. 89:19; Psa. 14

5. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ (1) secures to such as believe in him is justification (2); that justification includes the pardon of sin (3), and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness (4); that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood (5); by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God (6); that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity (7).

1. John 1:16; Eph. 3:8
2. Acts 13:39; Isa. 3:11-12; Rom. 8:1
3. Rom. 5:9; Zech. 13:1; Matt. 9:6; Acts 10:43
4. Rom. 5:17; Titus 3:5-6; 1 Pet. 3:7; 1 John 2:25; Rom. 5:21
5. Rom. 4:4-5; 5:21; 6:28; Phil. 3:7-9
6. Rom. 5:19; 3:24-26; 4:23-25; 1 John 2:12
7. Rom. 5:1-3, 11; 1 Cor. 1:30-31; Matt. 6:33; 1 Tim. 4:8

6. Of the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel (1); that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith (2); and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel (3); which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation (4).

1. Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Luke 14:17
2. Rom. 16:26; Mark 1:15; Rom. 1:15-17
3. John 5:40; Matt. 23:37; Rom. 9:32; Prov. 1:24; Acts 13:46
4. John 3:19; Matt. 11:20; Luke 19:27; 2 Thess. 1:8

7. Of Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again (1); that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind (2); that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth (3), so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel (4); and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life (5).

1. John 3:3, 6-7; 1 Cor. 1:14; Rev. 8:7-9; 21:27
2. 2 Cor. 5:17; Ezek. 36:26; Deut. 30:6; Rom. 2:28-29; 5:5; 1 John 4:7
3. John 3:8; 1:13; James 1:16-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; Phil. 2:13
4. 1 Pet. 1:22-25; 1 John 5:1; Eph. 4:20-24; Col. 3:9-11
5. Eph. 5:9; Rom. 8:9; Gal. 5:16-23; Eph. 3:14-21; Matt. 3:8-10; 7:20; 1 John 5:4, 18

8. Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that repentance and faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God (1); whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ (2), we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy (3); at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior (4).

1. Mark 1:15; Acts 11:18; Eph. 2:8; 1 John 5:1
2. John 16:8; Acts 2:37-38; 16:30-31
3. Luke 18:13; 15:18-21; James 4:7-10; 2 Cor. 7:11; Rom. 10:12-13; Psa. 51
4. Rom. 10:9-11; Acts 3:22-23; Heb. 4:14; Psa. 2:6; Heb. 1:8; 8:25; 2 Tim. 1:12

9. Of God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners (1); that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end (2); that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable (3); that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy (4); that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree (5); that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel (6); that it is the foundation of Christian assurance (7); and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence (8).

1. 2 Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:15; 1 John 4:19; Hos. 12:9
2. 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14
3. Exod. 33:18-19; Matt. 20:15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; James 1:17-18; 2 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36
4. 1 Cor. 4:7; 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; 4:16; Col. 3:12; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; 15:10; 1 Pet. 5:10; Acts 1:24; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; Eph. 1:16; 1 Thess. 2:12
5. 2 Tim. 2:10; 1 Cor. 9:22; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; 2 Pet. 1:10
6. 1 Thess. 1:4-10
7. Rom. 8:28-30; Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29
8. 2 Pet. 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11

10. Of Sanctification

We believe that sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness (1); that it is a progressive work (2); that it is begun in regeneration (3); and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means-especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer (4).

1. 1 Thess. 4:3; 5:23; 2 Cor. 7:1; 13:9; Eph. 1:4
2. Prov. 4:18; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; 2 Pet. 1:5-8; Phil. 3:12-16
3. John 2:29; Rom. 8:5; John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11; Eph. 1:13-14
4. Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18; 2 Cor. 13:5; Luke 11:35; 9:23; Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18; 4:30

11. Of the Perseverance of Saints

We believe that only those who endure unto the end are true believers (1); that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors (2); that a special providence watches over their welfare (3); and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (4).

1. John 8:31; 1 John 2:27-28; 3:9; 5:18
2. 1 John 2:19; John 13:18; Matt. 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9
3. Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30-33; Jer. 32:40; Psa. 121:3; 91:11-12
4. Phil. 1:6; 2:12-13; Jude 24-25; Heb. 1:14; 2 Kings 6:16; Heb. 13:5; 1 John 4:4

12. Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We believe that the law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government (1); that it is holy, just, and good (2); and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin (3); to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy law, is one great end of the gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible church (4).

1. Rom. 3:31; Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom. 3:20; 4:15
2. Rom. 7:12, 7, 14, 22; Gal. 3:21; Psa. 119
3. Rom. 8:7-8; Josh. 24:19; Jer. 13:23; John 6:44; 5:44
4. Rom. 8:2, 4; 10:4; 1 Tim. 1:5; Heb. 8:10; Jude 20-21; Heb. 12:14; Matt. 16:17-18; 1 Cor. 12:28

13. Of a Gospel Church

We believe that a visible Church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers (1), associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel (2); observing the ordinances of Christ (3); governed by his laws (4), and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word (5); that its only scriptural officers are pastors and elders, and deacons (6), whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the letters to Timothy and Titus.

1. 1 Cor. 1:1-13; Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; 8:1; 11:31; 1 Cor. 4:17; 14:23; 3 John 9; 1 Tim. 3:5
2. Acts 2:41-42; 2 Cor. 8:5; Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 5:12-13
3. 1 Cor. 11:2; 2 Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; 1 Cor. 11:23; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5:6; 2 Cor. 2:7; 1 Cor. 4:17
4. Matt. 28:20; John 14:15; 15:12; 1 John 4:21; John 14:21; 1 Thess. 4:2; 2 John 6; Gal. 6:2; all the Epistles
5. Eph. 4:7; 1 Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:27; 1 Cor. 12:14
6. Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; 15:22; 1 Tim. 3; Titus 1

14. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer (1), unto the Name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit (2); to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life (3); and that baptism is the visible sign of membership in the Body of Christ (4). We believe that in the Lord's Supper, believers in Jesus, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ (5); preceded always by solemn self-examination (6).

1. Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; 4:1-2; Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:12; 16:32-34; 18:8
2. Matt. 28:19; Acts 10:47-48; Gal. 3:27-28
3. Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; 1 Pet. 3:20-21; Acts 22:16
4. Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20; Acts and Epistles
5. 1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20
6. 1 Cor. 11:28; 5:1, 8; 10:3-32; 11:17-32; John 6:26-71

15. Of the Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day (1) and is to be kept sacred to religious purposes (2) by preparation for that rest that remains for the people of God (3).

1. Acts 20:7; Gen. 2:3; Col. 2:16-17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; 1 Cor. 16:1-2
2. Exod. 20:8; Rev. 1:10; Psa. 118:24
3. Isa. 58:13-14; 56:2-8; Psa. 119:15; Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 11:26; 13:44; Lev. 19:30; Exod. 46:3; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2, 3; Psa. 26:8; 87:3; Heb. 4:3-11

16. Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society (1); and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed (2); except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ (3) who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Prince of the kings of the earth (4).

1. Rom. 13:1-7; Deut. 16:18; 1 Sam. 23:3; Exod. 18:23; Jer. 30:21
2. Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13; 1 Tim. 2:1-8
3. Acts 5:29; Matt. 10:28; Dan. 3:15-18; 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20
4. Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Psa. 72:11; Psa. 2; Rom. 14:9-13

17. Of the Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked (1); that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem (2); while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse (3); and this distinction holds among men both in and after death (4).

1. Mal. 3:18; Prov. 12:26; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Jer. 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 6:16
2. Rom. 1:17; 7:6; 1 John 2:29; 3:7; Rom. 6:18, 22; 1 Cor. 11:32; Prov. 11:31; 1 Pet. 4:17-18
3. 1 John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Psa. 10:4; Isa 55:6-7
4. Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Prov. 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; 9:23-26; John 12:25-26; Eccl. 3:17; Matt. 7:13-14

18. Of the World to Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching (1); that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven (2), and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution (3); that a solemn separation will then take place (4); that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy (5); and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness (6).

1. 1 Pet. 4:7; 1 Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; 1 John 2:17; Matt. 28:20; 13:39-40; 2 Pet. 3:3-13
2. Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 5:1-11
3. Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12-59; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; 6:40; 11:25-26; 2 Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42
4. Matt. 13:49, 37-43; 24:30-31; 25:31-33
5. Matt. 25:35-41; Rev. 22:11; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; 2 Pet. 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:32; 2 Cor. 5:10-11; John 4:36; 2 Cor. 4:18
6. Rom. 3:5-6; 2 Thess. 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; 1 Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev. 20:11-12; 1 John 2:28; 4:17

ARTICLE 4

Church Covenant

God, by His sovereign grace and omnipotent love alone, has led me to repent of my sin and believe on Jesus Christ, trusting Him alone as my Savior and Lord. As one who has been baptized as a believer in Christ, I desire to unite with this church family. Therefore, I enter into a covenantal relationship with the members of this church. In humble reliance upon the Holy Spirit, I endeavor to pursue the following:

- (1) To meet together for any and all services on each Lord's Day, as the Lord shall give me opportunity, to serve and glorify Him in His worship, to edify one another, and to work together for the good of His church
- (2) To diligently guard the truth, upholding the standard of sound words recorded in Scripture and reflected in our Confession of Faith
- (3) To earnestly seek God's face in prayer both private and corporate for the pleasure of His presence, the needs of the saints, for personal and corporate cleansing from sin and holiness in our journey of sanctification, and for personal and corporate revival as He pleases to give it.
- (4) To avoid participation in any secret society which violates the Scriptures or our Confession of Faith

- (5) To wholeheartedly support, love, and care for the church's ministries and members, offering: my prayers, my financial gifts of tithes and offerings, my service
- (6) To boldly witness for the Lord Jesus Christ, living a transformed life and proclaiming the gospel as the Lord guides my steps
- (7) To actively pursue personal holiness before God in fulfillment of the great commandment – to love God supremely and my neighbor as Christ has loved us
- (8) To promote the unity of the church, being a peacemaker with all in the body of Christ
- (9) To respectfully follow the elders and other leaders of this church, trusting and supporting their leadership as they follow Christ
- (10) To humbly submit to the church's discipline, graciously repenting when approached about personal sin, and lovingly restoring others who become entangled in sin if they should come to repentance
- (11) To be active in the work of the ministries of the local church, unless providentially hindered
- (12) I also purpose to maintain family and private worship; if God has given me children, to train my children according to the Bible, to walk carefully in the world, to be just in my dealings, faithful in my engagements, and appropriate in my conduct, to avoid gossip, not speaking that which is evil, and to avoid unrighteous anger, to abstain from all forms of activity which dishonor my Lord Jesus Christ, cause stumbling to a fellow believer or hinder bringing a soul to Christ, to be zealous in my efforts to advance the cause of Christ our Savior, and to give Him preeminence in all things.
- (13) I also purpose to guard the biblical structure of the family and the sanctity of life, affirming marriage as that being between a man and a woman joined together by God, which man should not put asunder.
- (14) I further purpose to encourage my fellow brethren in the blessed hope of our Lord's return, to watch over one another in brotherly love, to remember each other in prayer, to aid each other in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feelings and courtesy in speech, to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation.
- (15) I moreover purpose that if I remove from this place, I will seek as soon as possible to unite with some other church of like faith and practice where I can carry out the spirit of this covenant and other principles of God's Word.

This covenant I make in the presence of Almighty God, the Searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to fulfill my obligations, as I shall answer at the Last Day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. I most humbly beseech the Lord to strengthen me by His Holy Spirit for this end, and for His glory and honor.

ARTICLE 5

Membership

Section I: Establishment of Membership

The membership of Living Hope Bible Church shall consist of persons whose applications have been approved and accepted by the Council of Elders after having given testimony of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to the Pastor or one of the Elders. Each member agrees to live in accordance with the church's Confession of Faith, Covenant, Vision Statement, and Constitution. Following their acceptance, new members will be presented to the congregation by the Senior Pastor or one of the Elders for affirmation at a monthly Members' Meeting or one of the church's regular worship services. The membership of the church shall include *active*, *associate*, and *inactive* members.

A. Active Members

The active membership shall consist of those members who manifest an active interest in the welfare and ministry of the church through attendance and participation, or through equivalent missionary activity. An active member must have no other commitments which would prevent loyalty to this Church or to the beliefs, principles, and policies to which we hold.

B. Associate Members

Associate Membership may be extended to those temporary residents such as students, missionaries, or special situations of those holding regular memberships elsewhere, who otherwise meet the requirements for Active Membership. Associate Members shall be entitled to participate in all functions and activities of the Church, but shall not be included in the voting Membership.

C. Inactive Members

Inactive membership consists of those Members who find it impossible to retain their Active Membership status through regular attendance or participation, or who are in the process of church discipline. Inactive Members do not have voting privileges.

D. Voting Membership

Any active Member of this Church, who is 18 years old or older is eligible to vote on any matter of the Church unless otherwise restricted by law. Missionaries shall not be counted as part of the Voting Membership except on those occasions when circumstances permit them to be present at Members' Meetings.

Section II: Removal from Membership

During the sixth month of the church year, and at such time as may be necessary, the Council of Elders shall review the Membership Roll.

- A. Members whose interest in the welfare and ministry of the Church has clearly ceased, shall upon vote of the Council of Elders, be dropped from the Membership Roll, provided reasonable attempts have first been made to restore them. Such action shall be reported to the church congregation at the following regularly scheduled business meeting.
- B. When any Member faces a change in his ability to meet requirements of his current membership status, it is desirable that such Member take the initiative in requesting a change in membership status as applicable. Members who, after due admonition, persist in a lifestyle which is at variance with the Christian principles and damaging to the reputation and ministry of the Church, shall upon vote of the Council of Elders, be dropped from the Membership Roll. Such action shall be reported to the church congregation at the following regularly scheduled business meeting.

Section III: Restoration of Membership

Any Inactive Member who resumes attendance and participation, and otherwise meets the requirements for Active Membership, may be restored to Active Membership upon their written or verbal request, subject to the approval and acceptance of the Council of Elders. Such action shall be reported to the church congregation at the following regularly scheduled business meeting.

ARTICLE 6 Church Government

Section I: Council of Elders

A. Elder Form of Church Government

Just as believers individually should seek to govern their lives by guidelines given in Scripture, Church bodies should follow scriptural instructions and precedents in governing themselves. The Elder form of government, as set forth in the New Testament, is, we believe, not only potentially the most satisfactory form of Church government; but is also that form of government which most closely follows Scriptural example. Just as following Biblical principles will enable the individual to live a successful Christian life, following Biblical guidelines in regards to Church government will enable a Church to more effectively minister within and outside of the local body of believers. This is not to say that a hierarchical, presbyterian or congregational form of Church government cannot be blessed or used of God: Church history obviously proves that they can be, often in great ways. However, we believe it is the Elder form of Church government that is presented as our Biblical model (Acts 14:23; 15:2, 4, 6, 22, 23:16; 20:17; Titus 1:5; 1 Peter 5:1-5).

B. Who Selects Church Leadership?

We are told in the New Testament that God is intimately involved in distributing spiritual gifts amongst believers for the building up of the Church body. Ephesians 4:11-12 says:

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ.” (ESV)

As the Holy Spirit is involved in granting gifts for leadership, edification and encouragement with the church, we see that He is also directly involved in filling leadership positions in particular Church bodies. In Acts 20:28, speaking to the Elders of the Church in Ephesus, Paul made this statement:

“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (ESV)

In other words, the Elders of the Church at Ephesus were appointed not just by men, but by the Holy Spirit. The human role in selecting Elders is to recognize, by their knowledge, lifestyles and spiritual maturity, those whom the Holy Spirit has chosen to lead. As believers today, we should seek out those individuals who, by their lives, demonstrate that they are qualified to be Elders. Guidelines for defining and recognizing those spiritual qualities which a prospective Elder must meet are given in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. This is dealing with his present character.

C. Qualifications of an Elder

1. He must be above reproach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 2:7); that is, blameless or of good report. There was to be no grounds for accusing this man of improper Christian behavior.
2. He must be the husband of one wife (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6), that is not a polygamist. In a culture where man frequently cohabited with more than one woman, Paul needed to make it very clear that an Elder in the Church was to be a “one-woman man”--loyal to her and to her alone.
3. He must be temperate (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8), that is, self-controlled. He must not be a man who is in bondage to himself and to the desires of the flesh.
4. He must be prudent (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8), that is, sensible, wise and balanced in judgment. He must not be given to quick and superficial decisions based on immature thinking.
5. He must be respectable (1 Timothy 3:2), that is, he must have an orderly life. He must demonstrate good behavior.
6. He must be hospitable (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8), that is, he must be unselfish and willing to share his blessings with others. His home life and personal life must be characterized by “hospitality”.
7. He must be able to teach (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9), that is, to communicate the truth of God to others – “to exhort in sound doctrine” in a non-argumentative way (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

8. He must not be given to wine (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7), that is, he must not be “addicted” to wine.
9. He must not be pugnacious, but gentle (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7), that is, he must not be a person given to physical violence, but one who is characterized by forbearance and tenderness.
10. He must not be contentious (1 Timothy 3:3), that is, not given to quarreling and selfish argumentation.
11. He must be free from the love of money (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:2), that is, not “greedy of filthy lucre”, or “fond of sordid gain”, or stingy with his material blessings.
12. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity (1 Timothy 3:4; Titus 1:6), that is, he must have the respect of his family and be recognized as the leader of the household. Paul adds: “for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?” (1 Timothy 3:5, ESV)
13. He must not be a new convert (1 Timothy 3:16), that is, one who is a new Christian and a babe in Christ. He must be a mature believer and obviously one who has been a Christian for a period of time—at least long enough to demonstrate the reality of his conversion and the depth of his spirituality.
14. He must have a good reputation with those outside the Church (1 Timothy 3:7), that is, unbelievers must also respect his character and integrity.
15. He must not be self-willed (Titus 1:7), that is, one who gets angry quickly and “flies off the handle”. He must be in control of his own spirit.
16. He must love what is good (Titus 1:8), that is, he must not follow after and desire those things which are evil and sinful. He must be the kind of person who desires to do the will of God in everything. (1 Peter 5:2)
17. He must be just (Titus 1:8), that is, he must be fair and impartial. He must be one who can make objective judgments based upon principle. This also implies that he is one who carefully obeys the laws of the land.
18. He must be devout (Titus 1:8), that is, holy and separated from sin.
19. He must hold fast the faithful Word (Titus 1:9), that is, he must be stable in his faith and obey the Word of God in all respects. He must not be hypocritical, teaching one thing and living another. This also implies that he is gifted in discernment, able to carefully apply the Word of God to complex life situations.

D. Functions of an Elder

1. He must help shepherd the flock of God (1 Peter 5:2; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 3:5), that is, he must care for the Church. Like a shepherd who oversees a flock of sheep, he is to guard the people of God against false teachers (Acts 20:28-30). He is to meet their needs and assist them in whatever way he can.
2. He is not to lord it over those allotted to his charge, but he is to be an example to the flock (1 Peter 5:3), that is, he is not to use his position for selfish gain or to demonstrate dictatorial attitudes. Rather he is to lead by example—obviously a Christlike example, as demonstrated in the qualifications just listed.
3. He is to teach and to exhort (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9), that is, to instruct and warn Christians. A significant part of the “shepherding” responsibility is to feed the flock of God.
4. He is to refute those who contradict the truth (Titus 1:9), that is, to stand up against those who teach false doctrine. He is to expose those who are “teaching things they should not teach” (Titus 1:11).
5. He is to manage the Church of God (1 Timothy 3:5), that is, to oversee the Church and administer the affairs of the Church. He is to be a man who can “rule well” (1 Timothy 5:17).
6. He is to pray for the sick (James 5:14-15), that is, along with the other Elders of the Church, he is to go where the sick are, anoint them with oil as a sign they are God’s child, and pray for their spiritual and physical well being.

E. Additional Duties of the Elder Council

1. To elect a Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer each year at the first meeting, after the Annual Meeting.
2. To establish policies and determine practices for the Church.
3. They shall provide guidance and direction for the Committees and Officers to insure coordination and harmony in Church activities.
4. To hear and consider all reports and recommendations submitted by Pastors, Boards, Committees, and Staff.
5. They shall examine applicants for Church membership.
6. At the first Council of Elders Meeting after the election they shall establish all Committees necessary to effective operation. Each Committee shall have an Council of Elders Member to serve as liaison.
7. To assist the Pastor/Teacher in the administration of baptism and communion.

8. To serve and appoint Pastoral Search Committee when necessary.
9. For the purpose of Civil Law, the Council of Elders shall be known and act as the Directors of the Corporation, holding the trust all property, real and personal, of Living Hope Bible Church. Real estate property shall not be bought, sold or encumbered unless authorized by a two-thirds majority vote at a Regular or specially called Congregational Members' Meeting.
10. To exercise general oversight of Church finances and Church property matters.
11. To recommend to the Membership the acquiring of or disposal of real estate property or non-budgeted items.
12. To participate in the discipline of erring Members when such is deemed necessary, while striving for reconciliation.

F. Election of Elders

1. Elders are to be chosen from amongst men in the Church Membership who have an interest in being an Elder and are demonstrating a lifestyle that meets the guidelines listed above. The Council of Elders will consist of those men who are qualified, with no certain number to be maintained.
2. Prospective Elders can be recommended by the Elder Council or recommended by the Church Membership. All Elder candidates will be examined by the Council of Elders. The candidates' names will be published alphabetically in advance, in order for the Congregation to evaluate. If there is no objection to the candidate, the Elder Council must be contacted before the Annual or Special Meeting. If the Council of Elders finds him worthy he will be presented to the Church Membership for its vote of affirmation.
3. In keeping with the scriptural injunctions not to lord authority, a vote of two-thirds quorum is needed to approve the Elder's recommendation. If each Elder candidate does not receive a positive vote of affirmation, the candidates name will be withdrawn and the candidate will not be appointed.
4. Each Elder must be reaffirmed by the Congregation every three years.
5. The Church Membership may ask for, and get clarification on any issues or decisions made by the Council of Elders.
6. The Church Membership may question decisions or policies instituted by the Council of Elders. It is the responsibility of the Church Member to examine the Scriptures to see if decisions and policies are biblical (Acts 17:11). Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the questioning member, to first contact any Elder or Pastor in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 and Ephesians 4:15-16. If necessary, a requested meeting will be established to discuss any questions with the Council of Elders.

7. Members of the Church may attend any meeting of the Council of Elders upon notification to the Church Office. The Board reserves the right to go into executive session at any time without observers.

G. Officers of Elder Council

The Council of Elders shall elect its own Officers and establish duties consistent with the needs of Living Hope Bible Church.

1. Chairman: The Chairman shall preside at all Council of Elders Meetings which are to be conducted according to Scriptural principles such as set forth in Philippians 2:2-8 and 1 Corinthians 14:40. The Chairman shall, in absence of the Pastor, be responsible for the leadership of the Church. The Chairman of the Council of Elders shall arrange the first meeting of all Boards and Committees within thirty days after the Annual Meeting for purposes of organizing.
2. Vice-Chairman: The Vice-Chairman shall assume all of the above enumerated duties of the Chairman in his absence.
3. Secretary: The Secretary shall keep or cause to be kept the Minutes of all Meetings of the Council of Elders and Congregational Meetings and shall attach to said Minutes all official correspondence relating to such meetings. He shall be charged with the duty of giving proper notice to the Congregation of Annual and Special Meetings.
4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct records of all monies collected by the Church, and the presentation of a financial report at the Annual Members' Meeting. Proper records and books concerning incoming and outgoing funds shall be kept and such records and books shall be available for auditing or inspection within a reasonable time by the Council of Elders.

H. Meeting and Quorum

The Council of Elders shall conduct Regular Member's Meetings once a month and Special Meetings at such other times as called for by the Pastor/Teacher or Chairman of the Board. A majority of the Board Membership shall constitute a quorum [for an Elders' meeting, but a Members meeting quorum shall be 33% according to Article 11, Section 5].

Section II: Additional Boards and Committees

A. Deacons

The Deacons shall consist of Members possessing the qualifications described in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The Deacons shall be responsible for the care and financial oversight, and the maintenance of the physical properties, to assist the Elders as needed in the general spiritual care of the Church, and perform other duties as assigned by the Council of Elders.

B. Committees

The Council of Elders shall establish any and all committees, consisting of Active Church Members, necessary for the effective ministry of the Church. The Committees shall vary in number, purpose, and term of duty as deemed proper by the Council of Elders. Each Committee shall be accountable to the Council of Elders. Upon request of the Council of Elders each Committee shall present Minutes or written reports of progress. Each Committee shall elect a Chairman and other Officers at the first convened Meeting after the Church's Annual Meeting and keep accurate minutes.

C. Missions Board

The Missions Board shall be responsible for the outreach of the Gospel to those not normally in contact with our regular Church program. The Missions Board will assist the Council of Elders by bringing considered recommendations regarding Missions to their attention and by serving as a wider base of counsel. Their expanded duties are specified in the Missions Policy.

D. Terms of Service:

1. Members of the Deacons and elected Members of the Missions Board shall be elected for a term of three years with approximately one third of the Members of each being elected each year.
2. All other Officers/Coordinators shall be elected for a term of two years.

ARTICLE 7

Senior Pastor

Section I: Elections

The Pastor/Teacher shall be selected by the Council of Elders and confirmed by the Members of the Church at a Special Members' Meeting called by the Council of Elders. Only one candidate shall be considered at a time. An announcement of a special meeting shall be given at the services on two preceding Sundays. One-third of the Active Members, 18 years of age or over (Article 5, Section I, D) shall constitute a quorum. The voting shall be by secret ballot. Three-fourths (75%) favorable vote of the quorum is necessary to extend a call.

Section II: Qualifications

The Pastor of Living Hope Bible Church must be a man who gives clear evidence of a call to the ministry of the Gospel. He must be qualified spiritually and trained to be the spiritual leader of the Church. He must be in agreement with the doctrines, principles, and policies of this Church as set forth in Articles 2, 3, and 4.

Section III. Duties

The Pastor/Teacher shall be an ex-officio member of all Teams, Boards, and Committees and he shall be responsible to the Council of Elders. The Pastor/Teacher shall arrange for, and/or conduct, all public and regular services of the Church and shall be responsible for general oversight of the spiritual welfare of the Church (2 Timothy 4:1-2).

Section IV: Cessation of Relationship

The cessation of the Pastor relationship with the Church shall be considered at any time when any of the following conditions occur:

A. Resignation

On presentation of the Pastor's resignation.

B. Release

1. On unanimous recommendation of the Elders, or
2. By church vote of at least two-thirds of the eligible Active Membership.

C. Terms

The Council of Elders shall determine the details of cessation. Normally, there shall be severance pay of three months salary and benefits.

ARTICLE 8

Interim Pastor

Section I: Recommendation by Elders

Should the office of Senior Pastor be vacant, the Council of Elders shall be responsible for filling the vacant pulpit each Sunday. The Council of Elders shall also, if deemed necessary, recommend an Interim Pastor to the church. The Interim Pastor shall be confirmed by two-thirds majority vote of the eligible Active Membership.

Section II: Special Considerations

The Interim Pastor shall not be part of the Council of Elders or the Pastoral Search Committee so that there is no conflict of interest. Any remuneration given to the Interim Pastor shall be decided upon by the Council of Elders. The release of the Interim Pastor shall occur when a Senior Pastor is called, or at any time determined by the Council of Elders.

ARTICLE 9

Other Pastoral Staff

Other pastoral staff shall be subject to the same election and cessation of relationship procedures under Article 7. They shall perform such duties as may be outlined by the Pastor and Council of Elders.

ARTICLE 10

Church Calendar

Section I: Fiscal Year

The Fiscal year of the Church shall be from July 1 through June 30 inclusive.

Section II: Office Terms

The terms of office shall be from July 1 through June 30 inclusive.

ARTICLE 11

Meetings of the Church

Section I: Monthly Members' Meetings

Monthly Members' Meetings of the Church for hearing of reports and the transactions of any special business, shall normally be held on the last Wednesday of each month unless otherwise specified by the Elders.

Section II: Annual Members' Meetings

Annual Members' Meetings of the Church for hearing of reports, the election of Officers, and the transactions of such business as would naturally come before it, shall normally be held on the third Wednesday of April.

Section III: Called Meetings

Special Members' Meetings may be called by the Pastor, by majority vote of the Council of Elders, or by request, in writing submitted to the Council of Elders (signed by at least 10% of the Voting Membership). Notice of the Meetings shall be given in the Church Bulletin and from the Pulpit on at least the two Sundays prior to the date of the Meeting. The nature of the business shall be stated in the announcement.

Section IV: Procedure

A moderator, usually the Pastor or a member of the Council of Elders, shall preside at all Members' Meetings. Meetings shall be conducted in an orderly manner according to 1 Corinthians 14:40. Unless otherwise specified, all items of business shall be decided by a majority vote.

Section V: Quorum

Thirty-three percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business unless otherwise required.

ARTICLE 12
Ministry Manual

A Ministry Manual shall be prepared, approved by the Council of Elders, and maintained as an instructional guide in the Church's various ministries and operations. The Manual shall include job descriptions and specific functions of each Ministry, Office, and Committee of Living Hope Bible Church.

ARTICLE 13
Licensing and Ordination

Section I: Licensing

Qualified men may apply for a ministerial license for the State of Illinois through the Church when appropriate. Such requests shall be referred to the Council of Elders for consideration.

Section II: Ordination

Men desiring ordination to the Gospel ministry shall make a request to the Council of Elders. The application shall be referred to the Council of Elders for consideration. If approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council of Elders, an Ordination Council of the Council of Elders and if desired other Elders, Pastors, or Lay Leaders shall be called to examine the candidate. Upon recommendation of the Ordination Council, the Church shall publicly ordain the candidate and present to him an Ordination Certificate, after a vote of affirmation of two-thirds majority vote at a properly called Members' Meeting.

Section III: Procedure

A moderator, usually the Pastor or a member of the Council of Elders shall preside at all Members' Meetings. Meetings shall be conducted in an orderly manner according to 1 Corinthians 14:40. Unless otherwise specified, all items of business shall be decided by a majority vote.

Section IV: Quorum

Thirty-three percent of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business unless otherwise required.

ARTICLE 14

Purity of Doctrine and Conduct

Section I: Doctrine

No person shall, while occupying a Church Office or other position of service which is under the auspices or jurisdiction of the Church, teach or otherwise actively propagate a doctrine which is contrary to any doctrine set forth in the Confession of Faith (Article 3). Any person who seemingly violates this Section may be suspended from office or position of service by the Council of Elders while investigating any violation. Removal from office will occur if said violation is not corrected.

Section II: Conduct

A. Church Member

If a sin is committed the following biblical procedure shall be pursued.

1. Go to the individual alone to restore, several times if necessary.
2. If no repentance, take two or three witnesses to establish the facts and attempt restoration.
3. If no repentance, the Elders will formally go to the unrepentant person to plead for obedience to the Scriptures. If no repentance, the Elders will inform the unrepentant person that the matter will be taken before the Church so that they may be instructed how to reach out and attempt restoration. There shall be no appeal to any court from that decision (1 Corinthians 5:6, 8)
4. If no repentance, the Elders will inform the Church of removal of the unrepentant person from the Membership of the Church.
5. He/She shall be considered as an unconverted person and fellowship as a Christian brother/sister shall be withdrawn.

B. Elder

Discipline must follow procedure as defined in 1 Timothy 5:19-20.

C. Restoration and Forgiveness

The church must restore to fellowship in full forgiveness those persons who show satisfactory evidence of repentance (2 Corinthians 2:6-8; 7:9-11). Persons shall be restored at a duly called congregational meeting upon recommendation of the Elders

and two-thirds majority of the members present and voting (Galatians 6:1). The entire process of church discipline outlined above shall be carried out and enforced in a spirit of Christian love, care, and sensitivity (Matt. 18:16–18; Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:1–13; Gal. 6:1; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14–15; 1 Tim. 6:3–5; Titus 3:10).

ARTICLE 15

Amendments

Section I: Articles 3 and 4

Articles 3 and 4 hereof may be amended by a ninety percent majority of the votes cast, providing that each voting Member has been fully informed and given the means and opportunity to vote.

Section II: All Other Articles or Sections

All other Articles or Sections of this Constitution may be revised or amended after Council of Elders approval and by a two-thirds majority of the voting Members present at any Regular or duly called Special Meeting for that purpose. Written notice of such proposed amendment shall be given at least two weeks previous to said Meeting.

ARTICLE 16

Dissolution of the Church

Section I: Requirements For Dissolution

The Living Hope Bible Church may be dissolved after Council of Elders approval and by a ninety percent majority vote of the voting Membership.

Section II: Disposal of Property

In the event of dissolution, after all debts are paid, the remaining Church property, both real and personal, and all proceeds there from, shall be given without cost to the one or more non-denominational, evangelical, tax-exempt religious organizations. The recipient organization(s) shall be recommended by the Council of Elders and approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting Membership.



*May the Lord bless you as you live for Christ and
are conformed to His glorious image!*

Adopted December 4, 2011