



**CONSTITUTION OF  
LIVING HOPE CHURCH, INC.  
Merrillville, Indiana**

**To Be Adopted September 25, 2016**

# **CONSTITUTION OF THE LIVING HOPE CHURCH, INC.**

**Merrillville, Indiana**

To Be ADOPTED

September 25, 2016

## **PREAMBLE**

The purpose of Living Hope Church is to establish and maintain a place for the worship of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, to provide for Christian fellowship of those of like faith according to our distinctive testimony, and to assume our share of responsibility and the privilege of sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit by all available means, both at home and in foreign lands. We, whose names appear upon the membership roster under above date, do hereby re-organize ourselves as a church, and adopt the following articles of church order and submit ourselves to be governed by them.

## **ARTICLE I. Name**

The corporate name of this church shall be "LIVING HOPE CHURCH, INC." Merrillville, State of Indiana.

## **ARTICLE II. Prerogatives**

Section 1. This church shall have the right to govern itself according to the standards of the New Testament Scriptures, and particularly to be guided by the standards as set in the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of First Corinthians, "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...till we all come to the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:3, 13.

Section 2. In connection, it will also have the right to purchase or to acquire by gift, bequest, or otherwise, either directly or as trustee, and to own, hold in trust, use, sell, convey, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of any real estate, property or possessions, as may be necessary for the furthering of its purposes.

## **ARTICLE III. Affiliation**

While maintaining its inherent rights to sovereignty in the conduct of its own affairs, Living Hope Church shall voluntarily enter into full fellowship with the Assemblies, of like precious faith associated with the Indiana District Council of the Assemblies of God (or its successor in interest) and the General Council of the Assemblies of God, and shall share in the privileges and assume the responsibilities enjoined by that affiliation.

## **ARTICLE IV. Tenets of Faith**

This church shall contend for the Holy Scriptures as the revealed will of God, the all-sufficient rule for faith and practice, and for the purpose of maintaining general unity, adopts the Statement of Fundamental Truths of the General Council of the Assemblies of God, as follows:

## **1. The Scriptures Inspired**

The Scriptures, both the Old and New Testaments, are verbally inspired of God and are the revelation of God to man, the infallible, authoritative rule of faith and conduct (2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 Thess. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21).

## **2. The One True God**

The one true God has revealed Himself as the eternally self-existent "I AM", the creator of heaven and earth and the Redeemer of mankind. He has further revealed Himself as embodying the principles of relationship and association as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Duet. 6:4; Isa. 43:10, 11; Matt. 28:19; Luke 3:22).

## **3. The Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ**

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare;

- (a) His virgin birth (Matt. 1:23; Luke 1:31,35).
- (b) His sinless life (Heb. 7:26; 1 Peter 2:22).
- (c) His miracles (Acts 2:22; 10:38).
- (d) His substitutionary work on the cross (1 Cor. 15:3; 11 Cor. 5:21).
- (e) His bodily resurrection from the dead (Matt. 28: 6; Luke 24:39; 1 Cor. 15:4).
- (f) His exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 1:9,11; 2:33; Phil. 2:9-11; Heb. 1-3)

## **4. The Fall of Man**

Man was created good and upright, for God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." However, man by voluntary transgression fell and thereby incurred not only physical death but also spiritual death, which is separation from God (Genesis 1:26, 27; 2:17; 3:6; Romans 5:12-19).

## **5. The Salvation of Man**

Man's only hope of redemption is through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

### **(a) Conditions to Salvation**

Salvation is received through repentance toward God and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, being justified by grace through faith, man becomes an heir of God according to the hope of eternal life (Luke 24:47; John 3:3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 2:11; 3:5-7).

### **(b) The Evidences of Salvation**

The inward evidence of salvation is the direct witness of the Spirit (Romans 8:16). The outward evidence to all men is a life of righteousness and true holiness (Eph. 4:24; Titus 2:12).

## **6. The Ordinances of the Church**

### **(a) Baptism in Water**

The ordinance of baptism by immersion is commanded in the Scriptures. All who repent and believe on Christ as Savior and Lord are to be baptized. Thus, they declare to the world that they have died with Christ and that they also have been raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16; Acts 10; 47,48; Romans 6:4).

(b) **Holy Communion**

The Lord's Supper, consisting of the elements - bread and the fruit of the vine - is the symbol expressing our sharing the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:4); a memorial of His suffering and death (I Cor. 11:26); and a prophecy of His second coming (I Cor. 11:26); and is enjoined on all believers "till He comes!"

**7. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

All believers are entitled to and should ardently expect and earnestly seek the promise of the Father, the Baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire, according to the command of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was the normal experience of all in the early Christian Church. With it comes the endowment of power for life and service, and bestowment of the gifts and their uses in the work of the ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4, 8; I Cor. 12:1-31). This experience is distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth (Acts 8:12 -17; 10:44-46, 11:14-16; 15:7-9). With the baptism in the Holy Spirit comes such experiences as an overflowing fullness of the Spirit (John 7:37-39; Acts 4:8), a deepened reverence for God (Acts 2:43; Heb. 12:28), an intensified consecration to God and dedication to His work (Acts 2:42), and a more active love for Christ, for His Word, and for the lost (Mark 16:20).

**8. The Evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit**

The baptism of believers in the Holy Spirit is witnessed by the initial physical sign of speaking with other tongues as the Spirit of God gives them utterance (Acts 2:4). The speaking in tongues in this instance is the same in essence as the gift of tongues (I Cor. 12:4-10, 28), but different in purpose and use.

**9. Sanctification**

Sanctification is an act of separation from that which is evil, and of dedication unto God (Rom. 12:1,2; I Thess. 5:23; Hebrews 13:12). The scriptures teach a life of "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). By the power of the Holy Spirit we are able to obey the command: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." (I Peter 1:15, 16).

Sanctification is realized in the believer by recognizing his identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and by faith reckoning daily upon the fact of that union, and by offering every faculty continually to the dominion of the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:1 - 11, 13; 8:1,2,13; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 2:12, 13; I Peter 1:5).

**10. The Church and its Mission**

The Church is the Body of Christ, the habitation of God through the Spirit, with divine appointments for the fulfillment of her great commission. Each believer, born of the Spirit, is an integral part of the General Assembly and Church of the Firstborn, which are written in heaven (Ephesians 1:22, 23; 2:22; Hebrews 12:23).

Since God's purpose concerning man is to seek and to save that which is lost, to be worshiped by man, and to build a body of believers in the image of His Son, the priority reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God as part of the church is:

- (a) To be an agency of God for evangelizing the world (Acts 1: 8; Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 16: 15,16).
- (b) To be a corporate body in which man may worship God (I Cor. 12:13).

- (c) To be a channel of God's purpose to build a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Eph. 4:11-16; I Cor. 12:28; I Cor. 14:12).

The Assemblies of God exists expressly to give continuing emphasis to this reason-for-being in the New Testament apostolic pattern by teaching and encouraging believers to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This experience:

- (a) Enables them to evangelize in the power of the Spirit with accompanying supernatural signs (Mark 16:15-20; Acts 4:29-31; Hebrews 2:3,4).
- (b) Adds a necessary dimension to a worshipful relationship with God (I Cor. 2:10-16; I Cor. 12, 13 and 14).
- (c) Enables them to respond to a full working of the Holy Spirit in expression of fruit And gifts and ministries as in New Testament times for the edifying of the body of Christ (Gal.5:22-26; I Cor. 14:12; Eph. 4:11, 12; I Cor. 12:28; Col. 1:29).

### **11. The Ministry**

A divinely called and scripturally ordained ministry has been provided by our Lord for the threefold purpose of leading the church in: (1) Evangelization of the World (Mark 16:15-20), (2) Worship of God (John 4:23,24), (3) Building a body of saints being perfected in the image of His Son (Ephesians 4:11-16).

### **12. Divine Healing**

Divine healing is an integral part of the gospel. Deliverance from sickness is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers (Isa. 53:4,5; Matt. 8:16,17; James 5:14-16).

### **13. The Blessed Hope**

The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed hope of the Church (I Thess. 4:16,17; Romans 8:23; Titus 2:13; I Cor. 15:51,52).

### **14. The Millennial Reign of Christ**

The second coming of Christ includes the rapture of the saints, which is our blessed hope, followed by the visible return of Christ with His saints to reign on the earth for one thousand years (Zech. 14:5; Matt. 24:27,30; Rev. 1:7, 19:11-14,20:1-6). This millennial reign will bring the salvation of national Israel (Ezekiel 37:21,22; Zephaniah 3:19,20; Romans 11:26,27) and the establishment of universal peace (Isaiah 11: 6-9; Psalms 72:3-8; Micah 4:3,4).

### **15. The Final Judgment**

There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life, together with the devil and his angels, the beast and the false prophet, will be consigned to everlasting punishment in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Matt. 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; Revelation 19:20; 20:11-15; 21:8).

### **16. The New Heavens and the New Earth**

"We, according to His promise, look for the new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness" (II Peter 3:13; Rev. 21:22).

## **ARTICLE V. Ordinances**

Section 1. The ordinance of baptism by immersion in water shall be administered to all who have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ to the saving of their souls, and who give clear evidence of their salvation. (Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-5).

Section 2. The ordinance of Communion will be observed as directed in the Scriptures (Luke 22:19,20; I Cor. 11: 23-26).

## **ARTICLE VI. Special Ministries**

Section 1. Infants and small children may be dedicated to the Lord in the church upon request of the parents or guardians through Child Dedications. (Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15,16).

Section 2. The ministry of laying on of hands accompanied with the anointing with oil, for the healing of the sick, shall be granted as requested and as the need may require (Mark 16:15-18; James 5:14).

## **ARTICLE VII. Membership**

Membership in this church shall be available to all those who give evidence of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who voluntarily subscribe to its Tenets of Faith and agree to be governed by its Constitution. Standards for membership will be established by the Council of Elders and printed on "Application for Membership" cards. Membership applicants shall be required to attend a course on church membership.

All applicants shall be required to have a spiritual background of at least three months of Christian living and attendance in the local church and sign a membership card. The names of all applicants for membership shall be read and/or published at least one Sunday prior to their becoming members of the church. Anyone knowing a cause why an applicant should not become a member shall notify the Lead Pastor or an Elder prior to their membership. These matters will then be discussed with the applicant by the Lead Pastor and/or Council of Elders for clarification. The decision of the Lead Pastor and the Council of Elders shall be final. The Lead Pastor and the Council of Elders may also accept letters of transference from other Assemblies of God churches upon the signing of a membership card by the applicant. The membership shall be classified as follows:

### **Section I. Active Membership**

#### **(a) Voting Membership**

All those who meet the Scriptural standards for membership and whose names appear on the membership roll shall constitute the legal voting membership of the church, provided they are sixteen years of age or over, that they attend the church and take part in the services, that they are living Christian lives and are in agreement with our distinctive testimony and are willing to support this local church with their tithes and offerings. Pastoral staff and spouses shall become active members, with full privileges and responsibilities, during their time of ministry at Living Hope Church.

(b) **Honorary Membership**

Anyone who has left the active membership of this church to engage in the full time ministry shall constitute the honorary membership of this church and shall be entitled to all the privileges of the church with the exception of voting and holding office.

**Section 2. Voluntary Severance**

Members in good standing who may desire to be transferred to some other congregation may apply for a letter, which shall be granted on the approval of the Lead Pastor and Vice-Chairman of the Council of Elders.

**Section 3. Revision of Membership Roll**

The Council of Elders shall have the right to remove from active membership any member who shall willfully absent himself from the regular services of the Church for a period of three (3) consecutive months except for physical disability, or who shall cease to contribute financially, or who shall be under charges for misconduct, or who may have made a doctrinal departure from the tenets of faith held by this Church on our Church Membership card, or who shall have fallen below the standard of membership as provided in Article VII, Section I of the Bylaws.

If the inactive member shall desire reinstatement, the inactive member shall petition the Elders to have his/her name returned to the active list. Upon receiving the request, the Elders shall render a decision. If the petition is granted, the member may resume voting privileges after having been active for a period of two (2) months.

**Section 4 - Marriage Ceremonies**

We recognize that God created male and female (Genesis 1:27, Genesis 5:2, Genesis, 6:19, Matthew 19:4, Mark 10:6). A person's gender is determined by their biological sex at birth. God established marriage between a man and a woman (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:4-6, Ephesians 5:31-32). Living Hope Church will not permit any pastor of the church, nor any person within the body of Living Hope Church, nor any pastor from any other church, to use any part of the Living Hope Church facilities or property to perform any type of marriage, counseling, cohabitation, covenant ceremony or service for persons who are of the same sex, or for those who have changed their gender assigned at birth, or for those who desire polyamorous marriage.

## **ARTICLE VIII. Church Officers**

At Living Hope Church it is understood the Scriptures allow for either a male or female to hold any office of leadership whether appointed or elected.

### **Section 1. Duties of the Lead Pastor**

The Lead Pastor is designated in the Scriptures as the head of the local church under the leadership of the Lord Jesus, and is referred to under the title "pastor" (Eph. 4:11), "overseer" (Acts 20:28), and "shepherd" (1 Peter 5:2). He/She shall be President of the Corporation and Chairman of the Council of Elders and preside over all business meetings of the church body as well as the Council of Elders and the Board of Deacons. He/She shall be the general supervisor of all activities of the church, and shall be an ex officio member of all other boards and committees. The Lead Pastor shall be responsible for all spiritual services, and shall have oversight in arranging for special services, convention, etc., with the consultation of the Council of Elders. He/She shall have the oversight of all visitation work and may appoint others to assist him in this work.

### **Section 2. Council of Elders**

(a) Elders shall be active members of Living Hope Church. A minimum of five Elders will serve with the Lead Pastor in providing spiritual oversight and direction for the church. They will serve as the governing body of the church and shall demonstrate faithfulness to the Tenets of Faith of the church.

Elders must be people who, as much as possible, meet the intent of the Scriptural qualifications found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They shall be people of wisdom and given to prayer and fasting for the needs of the church.

Elders will serve with the Lead Pastor in the leadership of the ministry of Living Hope Church. Some of their responsibilities will include being a prayer team with the Lead Pastor, visiting and praying for the sick, helping to resolve conflict, administering discipline, safeguarding the church from false doctrine, and providing counsel when needed. Elders will be available for any area in our church where spiritual leadership is requested.

(b) There shall be a Vice-chairman selected by the Council of Elders who shall serve as chairman of all boards and committees in the absence of the Lead Pastor. The Vice-chairman is responsible for keeping minutes of the meetings. Along with the Pastor, he shall be responsible for sending correspondence from the Council of Elders. If the pastorate is vacant, the general oversight of all church functions shall rest upon the Council of Elders and/or their appointee.

(c) Quorum: The majority present at any meeting of the Council of Elders shall constitute a quorum, provided all members were contacted to be present.



### Section 3. Board of Deacons

(a) There shall be a Board of Deacons consisting of seven active members into whose hands shall be committed the temporal management of the church with the consultation of the Pastor. This Board shall consist of the Secretary and the Treasurer, together with five other members. They shall demonstrate faithfulness to the Tenets of Faith of the church.

Deacons must be people who, as much as possible, meet the intent of the Scriptural qualifications found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. They shall be people of wisdom and given to prayer and fasting for the needs of the church.

(b) The Secretary shall keep the minutes of the official meetings of the Board of Deacons and the annual and special business meetings of the church. The Secretary shall perform any other clerical work necessary to the proper discharge of his duties. The secretary shall be responsible for the safety of all legal documents and shall be an officer of the corporation.

(c) The duties of the Treasurer shall be to work in cooperation with the Pastor in the establishment of a financial budget. The Treasurer shall be responsible for aiding the Pastor in the raising of monies for the budget. Once a month he will bring the bookkeeper's report to the monthly board meeting. The Treasurer shall make a complete annual financial report and shall be an officer of the corporation. His records shall be reviewed at least once a year by a finance committee and also when he may retire from office. The review shall be between the end of the fiscal year and the Annual Business Meeting.

The Treasurer and/or the President and/or the authorized representative shall be authorized to deposit all funds in a responsible bank in the name of the church and to pay all the church related bills. All checks shall bear any two signatures of the following:

1. President of the Corporation
2. Treasurer of the Corporation
3. Secretary of the Corporation
4. Business Administrator of the Corporation
5. Board of Deacons Appointee(s)

(d) Quorum - A majority present at any meeting of the Board of Deacons shall constitute a quorum, provided all the members have been notified to be present.

(d) Any action of the Board of Deacons shall be valid only when carried by a minimum of four votes in favor of the motion or proposition.

## **ARTICLE IX. Meetings**

**Section 1.** Meetings for public worship shall be held on each Sunday and during the week as may be provided for under the direction of the Pastor and the Council of Elders.

### **Section 2.**

- (a) There shall be an annual business meeting of the church at which time affirmation of the Council of Elders and the election of members of the Board of Deacons shall take place. The minutes of the previous meeting shall be read by the Secretary and the financial report shall be reviewed by the Treasurer.
- (b) The fiscal year of Living Hope Church shall end on June 30 of each year, and the annual business meeting shall take place as soon after the first of September as convenient, the time and place to be announced by the Pastor. Newly affirmed Elders will take office immediately. Elected Deacons will take office the first of October.

**Section 3.** Special business meetings of the church may be called when necessary after proper notice has been given by the Pastor or by the Vice-chairman of the Council of Elders, provided that the meeting has been agreed upon by a majority of the Council of Elders. Special meetings may be called also by petition having been signed by not less than one-quarter of the voting members of the church, the petition to be placed in the hands of the Lead Pastor or the Vice-chairman and proper notice of time, place and purpose of the meeting given.

**Section 4.** Due notice of all annual or special business meetings of the church is to be given by announcement made on the two Sundays prior to the date of the meeting.

**Section 5.** Quorum. No record of any special or regular business meeting of the church shall be made unless one-quarter or more voting members sign the roster on the day of the meeting to constitute a quorum.

**Section 6.** The Board of Deacons shall meet as need may require for the transaction of routine business of the church, the time and place to be announced by the Pastor.

## **ARTICLE X. Departments and Committees**

The Church may hereby provide for the establishment of various ministries or any other departments or committees as the needs of the work may require. All such departments shall be subordinate to the church and shall contribute to the harmony and development of the whole. They shall be under the appointment and general supervision of the Lead Pastor and the Council of Elders, and the Lead Pastor shall be an ex officio member of all committees and departments. All groups presenting public programs or speakers shall consult with the Pastor for direction and approval. All departmental constitutions, by-laws and amendments must be submitted to the Lead Pastor and Council of Elders for final approval before becoming binding in the various departments. Officers of all departments of the church shall be active members of the local church. All nominees for any office of any organization of the church shall be approved by the Lead Pastor and the Council of Elders. A Finance Committee shall be appointed by the Council of Elders for the review of the Treasurer's records as per Article VIII, Section 3, Paragraph C.

## **ARTICLE XI. Finances**

All funds for the maintenance of the Church shall be provided by the tithes and offering of the members and friends. Offerings shall be accepted by the Church at times and in ways as agreed upon by the Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons, and shall be administered by the Treasurer under their direction. All offerings of the church shall be counted by at least two responsible persons who shall sign records of these offerings. All funds shall be deposited in a financial institution approved by the Board of Deacons and records kept of all receipts and disbursements (Malachi 3:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

No person and/or department shall be allowed to solicit funds from the people of the Church for any reason without the consent of the Lead Pastor or the Board of Deacons in the absence of the Lead Pastor.

## **ARTICLE XII. Property**

All property of the church shall be deeded to the church and held in its corporate name. No property of the church shall be sold, leased or mortgaged or otherwise alienated unless such action has been recommended by a vote of at least two-thirds of the voting membership who are in attendance at a regular business meeting or a special meeting of the church which has been called for the consideration of the proposal. The President and the Secretary of the corporation shall certify in such conveyance, lease or mortgage, that the same has been duly authorized and recommended by the vote of the church. Such certificate shall be held to be the conclusive evidence thereof. It shall be the duty of the officers of this corporation, President, Secretary and Treasurer, to sign such documents necessary to sell, lease, mortgage or otherwise control or dispose of the real property of the corporation.

## **ARTICLE XIII. Elections and Vacancies**

**Section 1.** A minister to be considered for the office of Lead Pastor shall be a member of the General Council of the Assemblies of God and his qualifications shall be verified with the local district in which he is a member and also the Indiana District. He shall then be eligible for nomination by the Council of Elders and, upon their approval, become a candidate for the pastorate. A general meeting of the church membership shall be duly called at which three-fourths of all votes cast shall be necessary to constitute an election. His term of office shall be for an indefinite period of time. At any time after the expiration of the first year a confidence vote may be taken if deemed advisable by the Council of Elders or the Lead Pastor.

**Section 2.** The Council of Elders shall be chosen from the active membership of the church, mature Christians who have a minimum of three years active membership in the church, are at least 30 years of age and whose lives conform as closely as possible with the following Scriptures: Acts 6:3; 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They shall act as the nominating committee for new elders provided there is unanimous agreement at their official meeting. These nominees will be submitted to the church membership at an official business meeting for affirmation.

All nominees considered for affirmation as Elders shall have their names read and/or published at least two Sundays prior to affirmation by the membership. If there is cause for concern of any nominee's qualifications, the Pastor or an Elder should be contacted immediately. These matters will then be discussed with the nominee by the Lead Pastor and/or Council of Elders for clarification. The decision of the Lead Pastor and the Council of Elders shall be final.

All members of the Council of Elders will be affirmed by a two-thirds majority of the church membership present at the Annual Business Meeting. Their term of office is four years. After the initial four year term, an Elder may serve a second consecutive four year term, if he is recommended by the pastor and remaining Elders, and is affirmed at the annual business meeting. After two consecutive terms on the Council of Elders, the Elder shall stand down for at least one year before serving again on the Council of Elders. Elders may be removed at any official meeting of the Council of Elders or by a petition by the church membership as stated in Article IX, Section 3. In the event that three Elders' terms expire in the same year, one of those terms would be extended one year. If more than three Elders' terms expire in the same year, two of those terms would be extended one year.

**Section 3.** The Secretary and the Treasurer of the Board of Deacons shall be nominated by the Lead Pastor and Council of Elders. They shall be active members of the church, mature Christians who have a minimum of three years active membership in the church and whose lives conform as closely as possible with the following Scriptures: Acts 6:3; I Timothy 3:8-13. They shall be elected by a majority vote at the annual business meeting by secret ballot. Their terms of office shall be for two years from the time of election. The Secretary and the Treasurer's term of office shall expire in alternate years. The Secretary in even years and the Treasurer in odd years.

**Section 4.** Candidates for membership on the Board of Deacons shall be mature Christians who have a minimum of one year active membership in the local church, are at least 25 years of age and whose lives conform as closely as possible with the following Scriptures: Acts 6:3; I Timothy 3: 8-13. They shall be nominated from the active membership of the church by the Lead Pastor and Council of Elders and elected by a majority by secret ballot, at the annual business meeting of the church. The term of office shall be two years, arranged so that the terms of three board members including the Treasurer shall expire in odd numbered years and the four remaining deacon board members including the Secretary in even numbered years.

All nominees submitted to serve on the Board of Deacons will have their names read and/or published at least two Sundays prior to the vote of the membership. If there is cause for concern of any nominee's qualifications, the Lead Pastor or an Elder should be contacted immediately. These matters will then be discussed with the nominee by the Lead Pastor and/or Council of Elders for clarification. The decision of the Lead Pastor and the Council of Elders shall be final.

**Section 5.** Appointive Office - As existing and new ministry needs arise, the Lead Pastor and/or Council of Elders are authorized to make such appointments of leadership.

**Section 6.** Nomination. - All nominations from the membership shall be made through the Council of Elders; therefore, there will be no nominations from the floor. The names of the persons nominated for any office shall be published the Sunday prior to the election.

**Section 7.** Vacancies.

(a) Lead Pastor

(1) The tenure of office of the Lead Pastor shall be terminated by resignation, death, unscriptural conduct, doctrinal views contrary to the Tenets of Faith, or inefficiency. Power is vested in the Council of Elders to ask for the resignation of the Pastor on motion carried by a majority vote at any of its business meetings. If such resignation is refused, the pastorate shall not be considered vacant until the action of the Council of Elders has been confirmed by a two-thirds majority of votes cast at a church business meeting scheduled for that purpose, such meeting to be presided over by a District officer.

(2) The Lead Pastor's resignation shall be presented to the Vice-chairman of the Council of Elders and read to the church by the Lead Pastor or Vice-chairman. The Lead Pastor shall provide the church 30 days in which to obtain a replacement.

(3) Termination policy. In the event that the Lead Pastor's ministry is terminated by the Council of Elders or the congregation for any reason, he shall be given sixty days in which to terminate his relationship with the church.

(b) Vacancies in an office other than Lead Pastor

(1) Resignations shall be written and presented to the Lead Pastor and Council of Elders to be acted upon for replacement.

(2) Vacancies in any office may be declared by action of the Council of Elders whenever an incumbent has disqualified himself by unscriptural conduct or by doctrinal views contrary to the Tenets of Faith, or an attitude of insubordination out of harmony with the principles and purposes of the church.

(3) Vacancies because of death, resignation or removal from office for any cause may be filled by the Pastor and Council of Elders at any of its regular meetings or a special meeting called for the purpose. If this vacancy is in an elective office, the appointee shall meet the same requirements as other elected officers which shall be effective until the next annual election.

#### **ARTICLE XIV. Good Shepherd Day Care**

The Good Shepherd Day Care Committee consists of appointed members by the Lead Pastor and the Board of Deacons of Living Hope Church, and the members of the Pastoral Staff of Living Hope Church that serve as the Administrator of that school along with its Director.

The following are duties of the School Committee: serve as spiritual leaders of the schools; exercise counsel in the operation of the schools; provide necessary equipment and supplies; hold meetings to conduct school business; help with the advance planning for every phase of the school's growth.

#### **ARTICLE XV. Resolution of Property Conflict**

In the event the church may happen to be divided over doctrinal differences, the church property shall remain in the possession, of and belong to, the members holding the original Tenets of Faith regardless of majority. Should division occur as the result of this or other causes, the District Officiary shall be called in to arbitrate the difference and final decision.

#### **ARTICLE XVI. Dissolution of Property**

In the event the congregation should cease to exist as a church body, the property is to revert to the Indiana District Assemblies of God, which shall be authorized hereby to sell this property, or to use it in any way they see fit for the cause of Christ in the District.

## **ARTICLE XVII. Church Arbitration Procedure**

Inasmuch as the scriptures require Christians to take their dispute to the saints and not to the civil courts (I Cor. 6:1-8), all disputes which may arise between any member of this church and any other member of the church itself (including any officer or director thereof), shall be resolved by binding arbitration if efforts to mediate or conciliate the dispute have failed. Either party to the dispute may initiate the arbitration process by filing with the other party a written request for arbitration within a reasonable time after the dispute has arisen and efforts to mediate or conciliate have failed. In such a case, both parties shall each name an arbitrator, and the two so selected shall name a third. All arbitrators must be born-again Christians who have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit (according to Acts 2:4) and who are members in good standing of an Assemblies of God church. The third arbitrator chosen by the other two shall disclose, before accepting the appointment, any financial or personal interest in the outcome of the arbitration, and any existing or past financial, professional, family, or social relationships which are likely to affect impartiality or which might reasonably create an appearance of partiality or bias. Either of the parties to the arbitration, on the basis of such disclosures, may disqualify such a candidate from serving as the third arbitrator. A third arbitrator who serves without objection from either party has a continuing duty to disclose relationships or interests which may impair his impartiality. Either party, regardless of the stage of the arbitration process, may on the basis of such disclosure disqualify such a person from further participation. The arbitration process shall not proceed until the third arbitrator is selected.

The arbitration proceeding shall be conducted in accordance with the principles found in the Bible, with particular reference to I Corinthians 6:1-8 and Matthew 18:15-20. The arbitrators shall appoint the time and place for the hearing and cause notification to the parties to be served personally or by registered mail not less than twenty days before the hearing. Appearance at the hearing waives such notice. The arbitrators may adjourn the hearing from time to time as necessary and on request of a party and for good cause, or upon their own motion, may postpone the hearing to a later date. The arbitrators may hear and determine the controversy upon the evidence produced notwithstanding the failure of a party duly notified to appear. The parties are entitled to be heard, to present evidence material to the controversy, and to cross-examine witnesses appearing at the hearing. The hearing shall be conducted by all the arbitrators, but a majority of them may determine any question and render a final award. If during the course of the hearing an arbitrator for any reason ceases to act, he shall be replaced in the same manner in which he was originally selected. The arbitrators may in their absolute discretion admit as evidence any affidavit or declaration concerning the matters in dispute, a copy thereof having been given at least twenty days previously to the party against whom the same is offered but the person whose evidence is so taken shall be subject to cross-examination by such party. The arbitrators shall have the power to order and direct what they shall deem necessary to be done by either of the parties relating to the matters in dispute. Costs of the arbitration shall be assessed in the discretion of the arbitrators. Any submission of a dispute to arbitration shall not be revoked by the death of any party to the dispute, and any award will be binding upon such person's heirs and successors.

The decision of the arbitrators shall be binding on both parties, and both parties submit themselves to the personal jurisdiction of the courts of Indiana, both state and federal, for the entry of a judgment confirming the arbitrators' award.

The arbitration process is not a substitute for any disciplinary process set forth in the constitution or bylaws of the church, and shall in no way affect the authority of the church to investigate reports of misconduct, conduct hearings, or administer discipline.

## **ARTICLE XVIII. Order of Business**

**Section 1.** The regular order of business for the annual meeting of the church shall be as follows:

1. Opening
2. Election of Officers & Deacons (Affirming Elders and Voting on Deacons)
3. Affirmation of Elders
4. Reading previous minutes
5. Report of the Treasurer
6. Election of Officers & Deacons (Finalizing Results of Election)
7. Adjournment

**Section 2.** All business meetings shall be conducted according to “*Roberts Rules of Order, Revised.*”.

## **ARTICLE XIX. Constitutional Revisions or Changes**

This Constitution may be revised, amended or changed by a two-thirds vote of the voting membership of the church in attendance at any regular or special meeting called for that purpose, provided that due notice of such proposed change shall have been made at the regular Sunday services on two Sundays preceding the time for such meeting. All revisions, amendments, or changes shall be considered by a committee appointed by the Lead Pastor and Council of Elders and their conclusions shall be presented for ratification by the voting membership as provided herein. Copies of revisions, amendments and/or changes to the Constitution shall be made available to all members of the church at the time of the first notice of the meeting called for such revisions, amendments and/or changes.

## **ARTICLE XX. Participation in Leadership**

It is our purpose to follow standards in accordance with Biblical principles. Therefore, church leaders should use wisdom in allowing those who participate in leadership roles and positions. Those in leadership should uphold a Godly life and example to those around them.