

**The BY-LAWS of  
Living Hope of the Bay Lutheran Church  
Chesterfield Township, Michigan**

**1.0 VOTERS' ASSEMBLY**

- A. Members of the Voters' Assembly shall consist of all voting members of the congregation, eighteen (18) years and older.
- B. An annual meeting of the Voters' Assembly will be scheduled by the Congregational Chairman.
- C. The Chairman of the Congregation shall chair all meetings of the Voters' Assembly.
- D. The Secretary of the Congregation shall record and maintain detailed minutes of all annual and special meetings.
- E. The Voters of the congregation shall be notified of any meeting of the Voters' Assembly and any ballot without a meeting of the Voters' Assembly a minimum of two Sundays prior. Notification more than two Sundays in advance is preferable. The person(s) calling for the meeting or ballot may use a variety of media, provided they are effective in giving adequate notice.
- F. Special meetings of the Voters' Assembly may be called by the Senior Pastor or the Chairman of the Congregation. A referendum petition signed by a minimum of 10% of the voting members may also be used to call a special meeting. Dates, times and agendas of all special meetings must be announced for a minimum of two Sundays prior to the meeting. Voting will be restricted to agenda items announced for special meetings.
- G. Order of Business
  - 1. The meeting of the Voters' Assembly shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and By Laws and Christian conduct, and shall include:
    - A devotional and prayer
    - Minutes of the prior meeting shall be available for review and approved.
    - A State of the Church report from the Senior Pastor
    - A financial briefing from the Treasurer
    - Celebration of Mission and Vision Achievement
    - Issues which pertain to the overall direction and strategic ministry objectives of this congregation.

- Issues which are within the authority of the Voters' Assembly, as defined in the constitution of this congregation.
2. In questions of parliamentary procedure not specified in this Constitution or its bylaws, "Robert's Rules of Order, revised 1999" or any subsequent edition shall prevail.
- H. THE PROCEDURE FOR VOTING BOTH BY BALLOT AND ABSENTEE VOTING:
1. The chairman of the congregation and the secretary of the congregation will oversee all voting by ballot.
  2. Voting by ballot may occur over a previously announced period, with a maximum of four-weeks in length.
  3. Each ballot must be numbered and accounted for.
  4. Voting members must provide identification to obtain a ballot.
  5. A record must be kept of voting members who receive ballots and the number of each ballot must be recorded along with each voter's name.
  6. Voters shall be provided with a written description of the matters for which they are voting.
  7. Ballots cast must be secured in a safe place.
  8. Ballots may not be counted until the conclusion of the voting period.
  9. Ballots cast only apply to motions as they are written and announced prior to the beginning of the voting period. If a motion is amended or altered in any way, ballot votes will not be considered valid.
  10. The results of the balloting will be communicated to the congregation.

## **2.0 OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

The Officers of the Congregation shall be a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers shall be elected by the Voters' Assembly. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the congregation shall be the same as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board of Elders, and shall be males only. No person may serve as Chairman or Vice-Chairman who has not been a member of the Board of Elders for at least one (1) year. The Treasurer will serve as the Chairman of the Board of Directors. The length of the term of office shall be for three (3) years.

### **3.0 THE BOARD OF ELDERS**

#### A. Membership

The Board of Elders shall consist of an odd number of at least five (5) members and no more than nine (9) elected members. The Senior Pastor shall serve as a voting member. Term of office shall be for three (3) years, with a maximum of three (3) consecutive terms served by an individual. Approximately one-third of the Board of Elders shall be elected by the Voters' Assembly each year.

#### B. Duties

1. The Board of Elders is charged with the month-to-month oversight of the congregation, and shall be concerned with such issues as:
  - a. Spiritual oversight of the congregation, to the end that the congregation is an honorable example of the Bride of Christ and makes ministry decisions according to God's written Word, the Bible
  - b. The conduct of all organizations and societies within the congregation
  - c. Studying and revising the congregation's mission, values, and vision, and prayerfully applying the same to mission and ministry opportunities in both community and congregation
  - d. Evaluation of the congregation's ministry effectiveness
  - e. Conflict Resolution
  - f. Church Discipline
  - g. Approval of new members
  - h. Approval of hiring program ministry staff workers other than Called staff
  - i. Create and revise policies for the congregation's Operations Policy Manual and effectively communicate policy changes to the Voting Members.
  - j. Establish Ad Hoc Committees
  - k. Establish Standing Committees, including:
    - i. Church Worker Care and Compensation Committee, which is to foster a healthy culture within Living Hope for her professional church workers.
    - ii. Strategic Planning Council, which is facilitate long-term planning for Living Hope.

2. The Board of Elders shall delegate by policy matters of finances, church property, building programs, limiting the congregation's risk and liability, and church worker benefit programs to the Board of Directors. The Board of Elders shall delegate by policy all matters of implementing the congregation's ministry to the Senior Pastor and the congregation's staff workers. The Board of Elders sets policy for the Board of Directors and for the Senior Pastor and staff, and does not specify the means.
3. It shall be the duty of the Board of Elders to establish and to monitor compliance to governance policies, to resolve all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the Congregation which are not reserved for the Voters' Assembly or delegated by policy to the Board of Directors or the staff.
4. If the Office of Senior Pastor is vacant, then the Board of Elders will assume the duties and responsibilities of the Office of Senior Pastor. The Voters' Assembly must ratify the Elders or elect a new Board of Elders before twelve (12) months have expired after the Office of Senior Pastor is vacant. This procedure is to be repeated every six (6) months thereafter until the Office of Senior Pastor is filled.
5. The Senior Pastor will consult with and seek the approval of the Board of Elders in matters concerning the hiring of staff other than Called church workers. The Senior Pastor will be responsible for the staffing of all volunteer staff in accordance with this constitution and by-laws. All staff ultimately report to, and are ultimately responsible to the Senior Pastor.

C. Qualifications

Elder qualifications are summarized in 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:6-9.

- 1) **Above Reproach** – Elders must lead by example and demonstrate a lifestyle free of patterns of sin.
- 2) **Husband of one wife** – Elders, if married, must be devoted spouses.
- 3) **Temperate** – Elders must be self-controlled, enslaved to nothing, free from excesses.
- 4) **Prudent** – Elders must be sober, sensible, wise, balanced in judgment, not given to quick, superficial decisions based on immature thinking.

- 5) **Respectable** – Elders must demonstrate a well-ordered life and honorable behavior.
- 6) **Hospitable** – Elders must be unselfish with their personal resources. They must be willing to share blessings with others.
- 7) **Able to Teach** – Elders must be able to communicate truth and sound doctrine in a non-argumentative way.
- 8) **Not Addicted to wine** – Elders must be free from addictions and willing to limit their liberty for the sake of others.
- 9) **Not pugnacious or quick tempered** – Elders must be gentle, patient, and able to exercise self-control in difficult situations.
- 10) **Not Contentious** – Elders must not be given to quarreling or selfish argumentations.
- 11) **Free from the love of money** -- Elders must not be stingy, greedy, out of sordid gain, or preoccupied with amassing material things.
- 12) **Manage own household** – Elders must have a well-ordered household and a healthy family life.
- 13) **Not a new convert** – Elders must not be new believers.
- 14) **Good reputation with outsiders** – Elders must be well-respected by unbelievers and free from hypocrisy.
- 15) **Not self-willed** – Elders must not be stubborn, prone to force opinions on others, or abuse authority. They must be servants.
- 16) **Loving what is good** – Elders must desire the will of God in every decision.
- 17) **Just** – Elders must desire to be fair and impartial. Their judgment must be based on scriptural principle.
- 18) **Devout** – Elders must be devoted followers of Jesus Christ, seeking to be conformed to His image. They must be committed to prayer, worship, the study of Scripture, and the guarding of their own spiritual life.
- 19) **Holding fast the faithful Word** – Elders must be stable in the Faith, obedient to the Word of God, continually seeking to be controlled by the Holy Spirit.

Elder candidates may be required to have held previous leadership positions within Living Hope and have completed certain seminars, classes, depending on the requirements, if any, specified in the congregation's operations and policy manuals. Any such policies regarding Elder requirements must be approved by the Voters' Assembly.

#### D. Meetings

The Board of Elders shall meet at least six times per year at a time and place determined by the Chairman.

The Senior Pastor or Chairman may call special meetings of the Board of Elders by informing members of the time and place of such meetings at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance.

#### E. Quorum and Decisions

A majority of members of the Board of Elders shall constitute a quorum. Decisions of the Elders will be made by a simple majority of those members voting. The presiding Chairman shall not vote except in case of a tie.

#### F. Committees

The Chairman, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, has the responsibility of recommending the establishment of or the dissolution of Committees. Standing committees shall include: Church Worker Care and Compensation, and Strategic Planning Council, according to the Operations Policies of this congregation. Ad hoc committees include Call Committees for Called staff workers. The Chairman in consultation with the Senior Pastor also has the responsibility of recommending the Chairperson of such Committees. Any committee's recommendations shall be referred to the Board of Elders for decision. The Chairman of the Elders shall furnish to each Committee Chairperson copies of their respective job descriptions.

### **4.0 THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

#### A. Membership

The number of members on the Board of Directors shall be determined by the Board itself as needed for its duties, not to exceed eleven (11) elected members. The Senior Pastor shall serve as a voting member. The Congregational Treasurer shall serve as chairman. The Board of Directors shall elect its own vice-chairman and secretary. The length of the term of office shall be for three

(years) with approximately one-third of the Directors elected by the Voters' Assembly each year.

## B. Duties

The Board of Directors is to enable and facilitate the mission and vision of Living Hope by caring for the "business" aspects of the congregation. The Board of Directors is distinct from the Board of Elders in that: The Board of Directors is responsible to the Board of Elders; the Board of Elders with Pastor determine what ministries will occur, to what degree, and in what Christian manner, while the Board of Directors is given responsibility to determine how much ministries will cost, when and where they can practically occur, and the legal limitations of ministries. Specific duties include:

1. Preparing the annual budget in consultation with the Senior Pastor and the congregation's ministry staff, and the Strategic Planning Council.
2. Overseeing church finances,
3. Executing building expansion and renovation programs,
4. Maintenance of church property involving special and large scale projects, beyond the scope of daily, weekly, and monthly maintenance,
5. Limiting the congregation's risk through insurance and policy programs,
6. Evaluating and implementing church worker benefit programs with the consultation of the Board of Elders and the Church Worker Care and Compensation Committee.

Wherever possible, the Board of Directors is to establish and monitor compliance to governance policies which relate to the aforementioned areas of responsibility.

- C. Treasurer – A treasurer shall be elected by the congregation to oversee all expenses of the congregation. The treasurer shall serve as chairperson of the Board of Directors and give a monthly accounting to the Board of Directors and the Board of Elders of the congregation's financial position.
- D. Financial Secretary – A financial secretary shall be appointed by the Board of Directors to oversee all income to the congregation. Specifically, the financial secretary shall make provision for the weekly counting of the congregation's income. **Note:** At least two people must be present for the counting of money.
- E. Bonding – The treasurer and financial secretary shall be bonded, at the congregation's expense.

F. Review – All financial books shall receive a yearly review or audit. The results of the yearly review or audit shall be made available to the Board of Elders and members of the congregation.

G. Qualifications

Members of the Board of Directors are to be voting members of the congregation, with good character and a godly reputation. They are to be mature Christians, who are in agreement with the mission and vision of the congregation. No one shall be elected to the Board of Directors who has been a voting member of the congregation for less than one year.

Board of Director candidates may be required to have held previous leadership positions within Living Hope and have completed certain seminars, classes, depending on the requirements, if any, specified in the congregation's operations and policy manuals. Any such policies regarding Board of Director requirements must be approved by the Voters' Assembly.

## **5.0 MEMBERSHIP**

Membership shall be terminated by:

- A. Transfer to another Lutheran congregation in fellowship with Living Hope of the Bay,
- B. Release to a Christian congregation not in fellowship with Living Hope of the Bay,
- C. Whereabouts unknown and/or inactivity of 24 months or longer, as determined by the Board of Elders,
- D. Self-exclusion,
- E. Excommunication
  1. If any member is guilty of an impenitent offensive lifestyle, holding beliefs that are inconsistent with Article 3.0 of the constitution, he or she shall be subject to church discipline.
  2. The steps of discipline shall be (Matthew 18:15 ff):
    - a) Private admonition by the person witnessing the error.
    - b) Use of two or three witnesses
    - c) Visit by a Pastor and appropriate officer of the congregation
    - d) Withholding the reception of Holy Communion from the un-repentant individual(s) under discipline.
    - e) admonition by the Board of Elders or its appointed members



3. If this discipline fails, the Elders shall recommend excommunication to the Voters' Assembly. The member shall be notified in writing by a member of the Board of Elders at least ten (10) days before a meeting of the Voters' Assembly, stating the time and place. If the person has a valid cause and cannot attend, a second and final meeting will be scheduled. Subsequently, the voters may vote in his or her absence which could terminate the membership. If the excommunicated member later repents, the Elders may welcome him or her back into church membership.

F. Death

**6.0 ELECTION OF OFFICERS, ELDERS, AND DIRECTORS**

Procedures for nominations and elections of Officers, Elders, and Directors shall be specified in the congregation's Operations Manual.

**7.0 RECALL OF ELECTED OFFICERS, ELDERS, AND DIRECTORS**

Procedures for the recall of elected congregational officers, Elders, and Directors shall be specified in the congregation's Operations Manual.

**8.0 CALLING PASTORS AND STAFF WORKERS**

PROCEDURE FOR CALLING STAFF WORKERS --

1. A position description shall be written, noting the qualifications necessary. The Call Committee shall consult with the Elders, and when for positions other than the Senior Pastor, the Call Committee shall consult the Pastor when writing the position description.
2. The position description will be approved by the Board of Elders.
3. The congregation will be provided teaching about the position and the Biblical qualifications.
4. Newly created Called staff positions must first be approved by the Voters' Assembly, along with the Call Committee members, before any candidates are nominated for the office.
5. The congregation will be provided a minimum of fourteen days to submit the names of qualified candidates to the church office.
6. The names of all candidates nominated by the congregation will be sent to the District Office along with a letter formally requesting a list of recommended candidates for the Call.
7. The Circuit Counselor will be notified.
8. The Call Committee will develop an interview procedure and conduct interviews with candidates.
9. The Call Committee will prepare a ballot of at least two recommended candidates.
10. The Call Committee will consult with the Congregational President who shall call for a vote by the Voters' Assembly.

11. The voting procedure must be in accordance with Living Hope's Constitution and By-Laws.
12. A prayer vigil and/or special prayers shall be offered before voting occurs.
13. Once a candidate receives a two-thirds majority vote by the Voters' Assembly, the Voters shall be asked to make the ballot unanimous.
14. The Senior pastor will oversee the completion of Call documents and communication with the candidate, when calling for positions other than the Senior Pastor. The Call Committee will oversee Call documents and communication with the candidate when calling a Senior Pastor.
15. Prayers will be offered for the candidate.
16. If the candidate prayerfully accepts the position, remaining candidates on the call list will be notified. The Senior Pastor will oversee plans to install the candidate. The congregation will thank and dismiss the Call Committee.
17. If the candidate prayerfully declines the position, the Call Committee will determine whether to place another call from the same list of candidates or accept the nomination of new candidates from the congregation and District according to the procedure outlined above.

## **9.0 AMENDMENTS**

These bylaws may be amended at any scheduled meeting of the Voters' Assembly by a two-thirds majority of all members present and voting, provided the proposed change has been announced in writing for two weeks prior to the meeting.