



*Living Hope Baptist Church*

**Church  
Constitution**

*Completed 20 June, 2017*

# Table of Contents

Preface .....	4
Article 1: Name and Location .....	4
Article 2: Purpose .....	4
Article 3: Statement of Faith .....	4
Article 4: Legal Status .....	5
Article 5: Membership.....	5
Section 1: Active Membership.....	5
Section 2: Application for Membership .....	5
Section 3. Admission of Applicants .....	5
Section 4: Termination of Membership.....	5
Section 5: Privileges of Members .....	6
Section 6: Duties of Members.....	6
Section 7: Discipline of Members .....	6
Article 6: Church Meetings .....	7
Section 1: Annual General Meeting.....	7
Section 2: Special Meetings.....	7
Section 3: Notice of Meetings .....	7
Section 4: Voting .....	8
Article 7: Church Government .....	8
Section 1: Congregationalism .....	8
Section 2: Church and State.....	8
Section 3: Plurality of Leadership .....	8
Article 8: Church Offices: Pastors and Elders .....	9
Section 1: Powers .....	9
Section 2: Duties .....	9
Section 3: Number of Elders.....	9
Section 4: Appointment of Elders .....	10
Section 5: Appointment of Pastors .....	10
Section 6: Steering Committee .....	11
Section 7: Vacancies .....	11
Section 8: Removal of Elders.....	11
Section 9: Regular Meetings .....	12
Section 10: Special Meetings .....	12
Section 11: Minutes of meetings .....	12
Section 12: Quorum .....	12
Section 13: Action without Meeting .....	12

Section 14: Right of Inspection .....	12
Section 15: Decisions of the Elders.....	12
Section 16: Fees and Compensation .....	12
Article 9: Church Offices: Deacons .....	13
Section 1: Powers .....	13
Section 2: Duties .....	13
Section 3: Appointment of Deacons.....	13
Section 4: Removal of Deacons.....	13
Article 10: Church Offices: Other .....	14
Section 1: Officers .....	14
Section 2: Election .....	14
Section 3: Removal and Resignation.....	14
Section 4: Vacancies .....	14
Section 5: Inability to Act .....	14
Section 6: The Chairman .....	14
Section 7: Vice-Chairman.....	14
Article 11: Financial Policies .....	14
Section 1: Financial Reports .....	14
Section 2: Financial Policy .....	15
Article 12: Settlement of Disputes.....	15
Article 13: Other Provisions .....	15
Section 1: Endorsement of Documents and Contracts.....	15
Section 2: Amendments to the Constitution.....	16
Section 3: Record of Amendments .....	16
Section 4: Dissolution.....	16
Section 5: Financial Year.....	16
Section 6: Assets Distribution and Rights .....	16
Article 14: Certification .....	16

## **Preface**

This Constitution is drawn up so that Living Hope Baptist Church will be governed and administered in an orderly manner. This is to ensure integrity in all internal matters and an excellent reputation before the world.

## **Article 1: Name and Location**

The name of this Church shall be Living Hope Baptist Church.

The Church is resident in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal.

For the rest of this document, Living Hope Baptist Church shall be referred to as "the Church" or "this Church".

## **Article 2: Purpose**

This Church is constituted for exclusively religious purposes. The distinctive convictions of Living Hope Baptist Church can be summarised by the following: we are committed to expository preaching, Biblical "one another" fellowship, a Biblical approach to the Great Commission, the Five Solae of the Protestant Reformation, and a Premillennial Eschatology.

Its objectives include the expository preaching of the Word of God, ministering to its members, and related activities. Recognising the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Bible, this Church is committed to the following commission as its purpose statement:

*And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (The Bible, Matthew 28:18-20, English Standard Version)*

## **Article 3: Statement of Faith**

The Church subscribes to the teachings set out in its publication entitled: "Statement of Faith of Living Hope Baptist Church". This statement of faith forms an integral part of this Constitution as if it were repeated verbatim in this Constitution.

The above Statement of Faith shall be agreed to and signed by all the members of the Church.

Each applicant for membership shall be given a copy of the Statement of Faith and the following consent should be signed and dated by each applicant:

*I, the undersigned, freely and voluntarily subscribe to the principles set out in this Statement of Faith and understand and consent to the fact that should I violate such principles, I may be required by the leadership to either accept its counsel and discipline, or forfeit my membership of Living Hope Baptist Church.*

## **Article 4: Legal Status**

This Church is a voluntary association with full legal personality, with perpetual succession and the power to hold property in its own name, distinct from its members and capable of being sued and suing in its own name.

## **Article 5: Membership**

### **Section 1: Active Membership**

Active membership in Living Hope Baptist Church shall be open to all persons who make a credible confession of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, who have been baptised some time subsequent to that personal confession of faith, and who are not under Church discipline. Such membership is subject to the recommendation of the elders of the Church and the voting of the other active members of the Church.

### **Section 2: Application for Membership**

Persons desirous of joining the Church shall make application to the pastor or one of the elders of the Church. Two members appointed by the elders, or the elders themselves, shall interview such applicants and shall report to the elders who will, if satisfied with the report, submit the application to a Special meeting for approval.

Persons desirous of joining the Church shall give a clear confession of their faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour and shall affirm in writing their acceptance of the Constitution of the Church and their full submission to the Statement of Faith.

Persons desirous of joining the Church, who have declared their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but who have not been able to confess their faith through believer's baptism by immersion because of medical or other reasons, may, upon the recommendation of the elders, be admitted to the membership of the Church by vote at any Special meeting, subject to the solemn undertaking not to teach contrary to, or in any way undermine, the Church's belief in the practice of believer's baptism by immersion.

### **Section 3. Admission of Applicants**

Applicants admitted to membership shall, if possible, present themselves at a worship service designated by the elders for the purpose of affirming their membership commitment and for the acknowledgement by the Church of their membership.

### **Section 4: Termination of Membership**

Membership shall cease on death, transfer, resignation, excommunication, the member no longer accepting the Constitution or no longer being in full agreement with the Statement of Faith of the Church.

If any member is absent from the services of the Church for a prolonged period without good reason known to the elders, they shall make inquiry into the matter. In the event of such inquiry producing no satisfactory result, the name of the member concerned shall be reported to a Special meeting for membership termination or discipline as laid out in this Constitution.

Members in good standing who relocate to another Church can request a letter of recommendation from the elders.

### **Section 5: Privileges of Members**

Privileges of members include the privilege to:

- a. join regularly with other believers in worship and in sharing the Lord's supper
- b. be part of the local, visible manifestation of the body of Christ in mutual support and encouragement
- c. be under the pastoral care of the elders
- d. be free to participate in the business of Church meetings and in decision making in the Church
- e. serve one another with the gifts with which God has blessed each believer (1 Peter 4:10).

### **Section 6: Duties of Members**

Duties of members include the responsibility to:

- a. make every effort, as far as possible, to attend worship, fellowship, prayer and Church meetings regularly
- b. exercise their special privilege and responsibility to evangelise
- c. be faithful stewards of what the Lord has entrusted to their care in time, abilities and possessions including regular financial provision for the work of ministry
- d. work together in love and in humility bearing one another's burdens and exercising their gifts for the building up of the Church body
- e. seek to live holy lives
- f. marry only believing partners
- g. remain faithful to their spouses and bring up their children in the training and instruction of the Lord
- h. submit to the leadership (Hebrews 13:17) and discipline of the Church (Matthew 18:15-18), including the receiving of instruction and, if necessary, loving rebuke

### **Section 7: Discipline of Members**

The threefold purpose of church discipline is to glorify God by maintaining purity (1 Corinthians 5:13) and unity (Titus 3:10) in the local church, to edify believers by deterring sin (1 Timothy 5:20), and to promote the spiritual welfare of the offending believer by calling him or her to return to a biblical standard of doctrine and conduct (Galatians 6:1).

Members of this Church who err in doctrine, or who engage in conduct that violates Scripture, shall be lovingly subjected to church discipline, including dismissal according to Matthew 18:15-18.

Before such dismissal, however (1) it shall be the duty of any member of this Church who has knowledge of the erring individual's heresy or misconduct to warn and correct such erring individual in private, seeking his or her repentance and restoration. If the erring individual does not heed this warning, then (2) the warning member shall again go to the erring individual, seeking his or her repentance, but accompanied by one or two members who shall confirm that the sin has occurred or is continuing to occur, and/or that the erring individual has

been appropriately confronted and has refused to repent. If the erring individual still refuses to heed this warning, then (3) it shall be brought to the attention of the elders.

If the elders determine—after thorough investigation in accord with the procedures prescribed by pertinent Scripture, including Matthew 18:15-18, 1 Timothy 5:19, and Titus 3:10—that there is sufficient evidence that the erring individual has sinned or is continuing to sin, that he or she has been appropriately confronted, and that he or she has refused to repent, then the elders shall inform the Church and the congregation thereof at a Special meeting in order that the Church may call the erring individual to repentance. The erring individual shall be informed by registered mail that this public announcement will be made prior to the Special meeting where the announcement is given.

If the erring individual demonstrates biblical repentance, then notice to that effect may be given at a regularly scheduled worship service. If, however, the erring individual does not repent in response to the Church in its collective call to repentance, then recommendation from the elders shall be brought to a Special Meeting to remove the erring individual from membership. After such a meeting, (4) the erring individual shall be publicly dismissed from the fellowship and/or membership of the Church and the congregation thereof at a regularly-scheduled worship service. The erring individual shall be informed of his or her public dismissal by registered mail prior to the actual announcement of dismissal. If the erring individual, after such dismissal, heeds the warning, demonstrates repentance, and requests reinstatement before the elders, then he or she shall be publicly restored to all the rights, duties, privileges and responsibilities of fellowship and/or membership.

## **Article 6: Church Meetings**

### **Section 1: Annual General Meeting**

An Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Church members shall be held within six months of the end of the financial year. Proposed AGM agenda items must be submitted in writing to the elders for approval not less than three days before the AGM. At this AGM the members shall:

- a. Circulate an attendance register to be filled in by those present
- b. Read and confirm the previous AGM Minutes with matters arising
- c. Affirm the elders and deacons (even if no changes were made)
- d. Receive the elders' Report on the various ministries of the Church
- e. Receive the Financial Report
- f. Consider any changes to the Constitution that have been proposed
- g. Consider any other business that the elders bring before the meeting.

### **Section 2: Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the members may be called at any time by the elders.

### **Section 3: Notice of Meetings**

Notice (including the time and the place) of the AGM shall be given from the pulpit for two successive Sundays prior to the meeting, unless changes are to be made to the Constitution in which case fourteen days' written notice must be given.

Notice (including the time and the place) of special meetings shall be given from the pulpit at least seven days prior to the meeting, unless changes are to be made to the Constitution in which case fourteen days' written notice must be given.

The time and place of both the AGM and special meetings shall be determined by the elders.

#### **Section 4: Voting**

At all Church meetings any active member of the Church who has attained the age of 18 years shall be entitled to vote.

Any resolution passed by a simple majority (except where the Constitution requires a greater majority) of members present and entitled to vote at such meeting shall be binding on the Church until such resolution has been rescinded at another Church meeting.

At all Church meetings the vote shall be taken by show of hands except where a ballot is requested by at least five members.

A quorum shall be deemed to exist where at least 33% of members entitled to vote are present. If no quorum is present the Chair shall adjourn the meeting for seven (7) days, at which subsequent meeting those present will be deemed to form the quorum.

## **Article 7: Church Government**

### **Section 1: Congregationalism**

We believe in the principle of congregationalism, namely that each member has the privilege and responsibility to use his/her gifts and abilities to participate fully in the life of the Church. We recognise that God gifts His Church with pastors/elders who lead in a spirit of servanthood, equip and provide spiritual oversight, and with deacons who facilitate the smooth functioning of the Church. This principle further recognises that each member should participate in the recognition of the Church's leaders and that a constituted Church meeting, (under the direct Lordship of Christ and the authority of Scripture), is the highest authority for the local church.

### **Section 2: Church and State**

We believe in the principle of separation of church and State, in that in the providence of God, the two differ in their respective nature and functions. The church is not to be identified with the State nor is it, in its faith or practice, to be directed or controlled by the State. The State is responsible for administering justice, ensuring an orderly community and promoting the welfare of its citizens. The church is responsible for preaching the gospel and for demonstrating and making known God's will and care for all mankind.

### **Section 3: Plurality of Leadership**

We believe in the plurality of elders providing spiritual leadership supported by deacons.

## **Article 8: Church Offices: Pastors and Elders**

### **Section 1: Powers**

All the affairs of this Church shall be exercised by or under the direction of the elders who are responsible to teach and give oversight to the congregation. The elders, jointly referred to as the eldership, shall have the following powers in addition to any others granted in this Constitution:

- a. To select and remove all the officers, agents, pastors, and employees of the Church in a manner consistent with the law; prescribe appropriate duties for them; and fix the terms of their office or appointment, and the amount of their compensation.
- b. To make disbursements from the funds and properties of the Church as required to fulfil the purposes of the Church as stated in this Constitution.
- c. To conduct, manage, and control the activities and affairs of the Church, establishing such policies, practices, rules and regulations necessary for this purpose.
- d. To adopt and use a church seal and to alter the form of the seal as they choose.
- e. To assist the pastor in the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- f. To carry on a business and apply any such profit that results from the business activity in which it may legally engage for the purpose of the Church as defined in this Constitution.

The elders do not have the power to incur debt. If in extraordinary circumstances the elders believe that limited debt is necessary to fulfil the purposes of this Church as set forth in this Constitution, they shall call a Special meeting of the members to detail the amount and purpose of the debt. Unanimous approval by the elders and a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at this Special meeting shall be necessary for the Church to incur debt in any instance.

### **Section 2: Duties**

The duties of eldership include the following:

- a. ensuring the continuation of sound preaching and teaching from the Word of God;
- b. exhorting, admonishing and encouraging fellow believers;
- c. visiting the sick and the members in order to exhort and encourage them by prayer and the ministry of the Word of God;
- d. guiding the Church in decision making;
- e. seeking out and nurturing the exercise of spiritual gifts by members so that in the local church the body of Christ may be built up and function effectively in the evangelisation of the community;
- f. stimulating and maintaining interest in the world-wide church of Christ.

### **Section 3: Number of Elders**

The authorised number of elders shall not be less than three or more than ten.

#### **Section 4: Appointment of Elders**

Male members who exhibit the qualities laid down in Scripture (see 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9) may be considered for this ministry in the Word, shepherding and prayer.

The nomination of a suitable candidate is to be submitted by any member to the eldership/eldership committee for consideration. Any nominee must be over the age of 21 and have been an active member of the Church for at least two years.

Upon agreement by the elders, the name/s are to be submitted to a Special Meeting or at the Annual General Meeting. The nominees require approval of at least 75% of these present and eligible to vote in order to be appointed as elders by the Church.

This vote shall be by secret ballot. An elder shall be set apart by the laying on of hands by the other elders.

#### **Section 5: Appointment of Pastors**

For the purpose of the Constitution, elders called to the full time ministry to the Church shall be termed "pastors". A pastor may receive remuneration for his service as a pastor.

This appointment is vested in the membership of the Church and the procedure shall be as follows:

- a. A special day of prayer and fasting will be called for Church members to seek God's will in this regard.
- b. The elders shall consider suitable names and shall bring their recommendation to the Church at a Special Meeting. The elders shall put before the meeting only one name at a time. The elders will not recommend a man for the position of pastor at the Church if he does not practice expository preaching (preaching where the content of the sermon accurately reflects the content of the Scripture text(s) being taught) and if he does not wholeheartedly espouse the doctrine of the church.
- c. A call shall be extended provided at least 75% of the members present vote in favour. This vote shall be by secret ballot. The prospective pastor's appointment is contingent upon his affirming in writing his full agreement with the Statement of Faith and his acceptance of the Constitution of the Church.
- d. On commencement of his ministry he will become a member of the Church but members of his family wishing to join the Church must apply as set out in this Constitution for all other individuals desiring membership.
- e. Termination of the appointment shall be by three months' notice in writing by either side unless otherwise mutually agreed provided that his duties may be suspended by the Church immediately.
- f. In the event of the pastor being on extended leave or the Church being without a pastor, the eldership committee shall assume responsibility for the oversight of the spiritual affairs of the Church including all elders' functions.

## **Section 6: Steering Committee**

In the event of there being fewer than three elders, an eldership committee shall be appointed and shall be made up of the remaining elder/s together with a male deacon/s selected by the remaining elder/s. If there is no remaining elder the steering committee shall consist of all male members who hold the office of deacon. This steering committee shall consist of at least three to constitute a quorum. Should the collective body be less than three then they shall by consensus co-opt a competent Church male member who shall be given equal status for the necessary period. The elder shall be the chairman. If there is no remaining elder, the steering committee will elect a chairman from amongst its members.

The steering committee shall have the same powers and duties as the eldership. The purpose of the steering committee is to assist in leadership until new elders can be trained and appointed.

If there is no unanimity on a particular matter, the committee shall adjourn the discussion for further individual prayer and consideration. The committee shall reconvene within 14 days for final a decision.

## **Section 7: Vacancies**

Any elder may resign effective upon giving written notice to the Chairman of the eldership, unless the notice specifies a later time for the effectiveness of the resignation. If the resignation is to take effect at some future time, a successor may be selected and appointed before that time. The vacancy created by the resignation does not need to be filled before the next AGM as long as the eldership consists of at least three remaining elders.

The appointment of a successor shall follow the process outlined in this Constitution.

A vacancy in the eldership shall be considered to exist in the case of the death, resignation, or removal of any elder, or if a need exists and the specified limit is not exceeded.

## **Section 8: Removal of Elders**

Church officers shall be subject to the same discipline as other members of the Church and the same ultimate sanction of loss of membership and thus loss of office.

Any elder may be removed from office if he becomes physically incapacitated, spiritually unqualified, or his inability to serve is established in the minds of the remainder of the elders.

In addition, the Church may consider the direct termination of an elder's office on the following grounds:

- a. unrepentant sin
- b. deviating from biblical doctrine as summarised in the Statement of Faith
- c. neglect of duty or incompetence
- d. use of office for personal gain

**Section 9: Regular Meetings**

Regular meetings of the elders shall be held as determined from time to time by the elders. However, the elders shall not meet less than ten times per year.

**Section 10: Special Meetings**

Special meetings of the elders may be called at any time by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the elders or by a majority of the elders. Special meetings can be held at any time if all the elders have been personally contacted and not less than two-thirds can attend.

**Section 11: Minutes of meetings**

A designated elder shall keep or cause to be kept a book of minutes. These minutes shall include the time and place of elders' meetings, the names of those present and the discussions and decisions of the meeting. The minutes will be available to the elders at least two weeks before the next meeting. The minutes shall be confirmed as a true record of the proceedings at the subsequent meeting and recorded in the minutes of that subsequent meeting.

**Section 12: Quorum**

A majority of the elders currently serving shall constitute a quorum except as otherwise provided in this Constitution. A majority of the elders present at a meeting (whether a quorate or not) may adjourn any meeting.

Whenever the matter to be considered concerns calling or dismissing a pastor, or buying or selling real estate, a quorum shall consist of not less than two-thirds of the elders.

**Section 13: Action without Meeting**

Any action required or permitted by the elders may be taken without a meeting if all the elders consent in writing to a resolution to such action, provided that the resolution is subsequently minuted and signed by all the elders at the first meeting of the elders following the adoption of the resolution.

**Section 14: Right of Inspection**

Every elder shall have the right at any reasonable time to inspect and copy all books, records and documents of this Church. Elders also have the right to inspect the physical properties of this Church.

**Section 15: Decisions of the Elders**

Decisions shall be reached after prayerful consideration by unanimous vote, unless indicated otherwise in the constitution, in a spirit of humility, each member regarding the others before himself.

**Section 16: Fees and Compensation**

Elders shall not receive any stated or fixed salary for their services. Elders serving this Church in some capacity other than their duties as an elder, for example the pastor, can receive compensation from this Church.

Any person receiving compensation directly or indirectly from the Church shall not be in a position to determine the nature or amount of that compensation.

## **Article 9: Church Offices: Deacons**

### **Section 1: Powers**

A deacon will serve in a ministry cluster under the authority of the eldership in general and the elder in charge of that cluster in particular. The number of deacons required, the functions of the deacons, and the manner in which the deacons in a cluster operate, will depend on the needs of the particular cluster and will be determined by the elder in charge.

### **Section 2: Duties**

Those who hold the office of deacon serve the Church by relieving the elders of administrative and practical duties. Each deacon shall have specific work to fulfil in the Church.

The elders shall define the roles of deacons required.

### **Section 3: Appointment of Deacons**

In accordance with the teaching in 1 Timothy 3:8 – 13 and the practice in Acts 6:1 – 6, the Church will elect from among the members those who are mature, in good standing, who meet the biblical criteria, and who are performing significant service to the body at the Church to serve in the office of deacon.

In order to facilitate the effective ministry of the Church and the efficient functioning of deacons, the elders will identify as many ministry clusters as are necessary and should determine which elder/s has oversight of each cluster. The elders should also determine the number of deacons that are necessary to be appointed to each cluster. A deacon may be appointed to more than one cluster.

The election of deacons should ordinarily take place at the Annual General Meeting, however, if the elders determine that it is necessary to appoint one or more deacons at any other time during the year, this can be done at any properly constituted Church meeting.

The nomination of a suitable candidate is to be submitted by any member to the eldership/ eldership committee for consideration. Any nominee must be over the age of 21 and have been an active member of the Church for at least two years.

Upon agreement by the elders, the name/s are to be submitted to a Special Meeting or at the Annual General Meeting. The nominees require approval of a simple majority of those present and eligible to vote in order to be appointed as deacons by the Church.

This vote shall be by secret ballot.

### **Section 4: Removal of Deacons**

Church officers shall be subject to the same discipline as other members of the Church and the same ultimate sanction of loss of membership and thus loss of office. In addition, the Church may consider the direct termination of a deacon's office on the following grounds:

- a. unrepentant sin
- b. deviating from biblical doctrine as summarised in the Statement of Faith
- c. neglect of duty or incompetence
- d. use of office for personal gain

## **Article 10: Church Offices: Other**

### **Section 1: Officers**

The officers of this Church shall be a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman.

### **Section 2: Election**

The officers shall be chosen annually by the elders from within the eldership. Each officer shall hold his office until he shall resign, be removed or become otherwise disqualified to serve, or until his successor shall be elected by the elders.

### **Section 3: Removal and Resignation**

Any officer may be removed, either with or without cause, by the remainder of the elders at any time.

Any officer may resign at any time by giving written notice to the eldership as a whole.

Any such resignation shall take effect on the date of its reception or at any later time specified therein.

### **Section 4: Vacancies**

A vacancy in any office shall be filled by the elders from among their own members.

### **Section 5: Inability to Act**

In the case of absence or inability to act of any officer, the elders may delegate the powers or duties of such officer to any other officer or elder whom the elders select.

### **Section 6: The Chairman**

The Chairman shall preside at all meetings of the elders. Those meetings shall be conducted according to scriptural principles such as those set forth in Philippians 2:2-8 and the principles of common practise relating to the conducting of meetings. If required, the Chairman shall be responsible to inform the appropriate governmental authorities of any changes to this Constitution.

### **Section 7: Vice-Chairman**

In the absence or disability of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman shall perform all the duties of the Chairman.

## **Article 11: Financial Policies**

### **Section 1: Financial Reports**

A designated elder shall oversee the finances of the Church and keep adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of this Church. The designated elder may be assisted by a deacon. He will arrange for the deposit of all funds and valuables in the name of this Church with such depositories as may be designated by the elders. These depositories must be registered financial institutions. He shall arrange for the disbursement of funds of this Church as ordered or empowered by the elders. He shall render to the Chairman or the elders whenever they request it an account of all his transactions and of the financial condition of this Church. He shall make financial

reports available to each regular elders' meeting and for the Annual General Meeting. The Church financial records shall be audited each year by a professional external auditor appointed by the elders.

### **Section 2: Financial Policy**

The Church will operate its financial activities according to the document entitled "The Financial Policies of Living Hope Baptist Church." This policy is open to inspection by any person who so requests.

## **Article 12: Settlement of Disputes**

In the event of a serious dispute arising as between:

- a. a group of members and the remaining membership;
- b. a pastor and the whole membership or a group within the membership;
- c. a pastor and the elders;
- d. a pastor and the deacons; or
- e. the elders and the deacons

such that, in the opinion of the elders or the pastor, it is impinging on the effective ministry of the Church or is seriously threatening its unity, the elders or pastor shall call upon the Church to set aside a day of prayer and fasting in order to seek the Lord's gracious intervention.

After having exhausted all Constitutional means, any of the above parties (i.e. the pastor, an elder, a deacon or a group of ten members) may call for a meeting with the elders with a view to resolving the differences. At such a meeting a pastor or elder of another like-minded church, acceptable to both disputing parties, shall be present and shall be the chairman of the meeting.

It shall be the obligation of those in dispute and of the Church membership as a whole to afford the elders and deacons and the nominated pastor or elder every reasonable opportunity to assist in bringing about a God-honouring solution. The nominee may, if he so elects, submit a written report with appropriate recommendations which will be brought to a Church meeting for voting.

## **Article 13: Other Provisions**

### **Section 1: Endorsement of Documents and Contracts**

The elders may authorise any officer or agent to enter into any contract in the name of and on behalf of the Church. Unless so authorised by the elders, no officer, agent or employee shall have any power or authority to bind the Church by any contract or agreement, or to pledge its credit, or to render it liable for any purpose or to any amount.

Subject to the provisions of applicable law, any note, mortgage, evidence of indebtedness, contract, conveyance, or other instrument in writing and any assignment or endorsement thereof executed or entered into between this Church and any other person, when signed jointly by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman shall be valid and binding.

## **Section 2: Amendments to the Constitution**

This Constitution may be changed by a resolution. Changes must be proposed by the elders and subsequently passed by not less than two-thirds of the voting members who are at the Annual General Meeting or Special Meeting.

A written notice must be given not less than fourteen (14) days before the meeting at which the changes to the Constitution are to be voted on. This written notice must indicate the proposed changes to the Constitution and the date and time of the meeting. The quorum for an Annual General Meeting or Special Meeting at which a vote to change the Constitution is taken must consist of not less than two-thirds of the current members of the Church.

## **Section 3: Record of Amendments**

Whenever this Constitution is amended or a new section or article is included, it shall be copied in the book of minutes with the original Constitution. If any section or article is repealed, the fact of its repeal with the date of the meeting at which the repeal was enacted or written assent was filed shall be stated in the book of minutes.

## **Section 4: Dissolution**

The Church may close down if the elders and at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at a meeting convened for the purpose of considering such a matter, are in favour of closing down. In the event of the dissolution of this Church, the elders in consultation with the members shall decide how to wind up or dissolve the affairs of the Church, shall use the Church's assets to pay off all the debts of the Church, and shall cause the assets of the Church to be distributed to another non-profit organisation with purposes similar to this Church as defined in this Constitution. Property or money left over after all the Church's debts have been met cannot be paid to or given to members of the Church.

## **Section 5: Financial Year**

The financial year of Living Hope Baptist Church shall be from 01 March of each year to the end of February of the following year.

## **Section 6: Assets Distribution and Rights**

The Church's income and property are not distributable to its members or office-bearers, except as reasonable compensation for services rendered. Members or office bearers of the Church do not have rights over things that belong to the Church solely by virtue of their being members or office-bearers.

## **Article 14: Certification**

We, the undersigned, being the officers of Living Hope Baptist Church hereby certify that the above Constitution was adopted by the elders and members of Living Hope Baptist Church at Pietermaritzburg on \_\_\_\_\_.

This Constitution is, as of the date of certification, the duly adopted and existing Constitution of this Church.

---

Chairman

---

Vice-Chairman