

The Living Hope Church of Dixon Constitution

Article I Name

The name of the organization shall be The Living Hope Church of Dixon, an Evangelical Free Church.

Article II Statement of Faith

1. We believe the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men, and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.
2. We believe in one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. We believe that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, he arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Advocate.
4. We believe that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, and during this age to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, and indwell, guide, instruct, and empower the believer for godly living and service.
5. We believe that man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is therefore lost and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.
6. We believe that the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit, and thus become children of God.
7. We believe that water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as means of salvation.
8. We believe that the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ of which He is the Head.
9. We believe that only those who are thus members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local church.
10. We believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church, and that every local church has the right under Christ to decide and govern its own affairs.
11. We believe in the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this 'Blessed Hope' has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.
12. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the dead; of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord, of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

Article III
Purpose

1. The purpose of the Living Hope Church is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples.

Article IV
Membership

1. Method of Admission to Membership candidates for membership shall:

- A. Notify the elder board of their interest in membership
- B. Attend the membership class where the following will be discussed:
 - i. Living Hope's doctrine and philosophy of ministry
 - ii. ministry opportunities in the church
 - iii. Christian conduct
- C. Following the membership class, the candidates shall meet with an elder to affirm their faith in Christ and desire to join in the ministry of Living Hope.
- D. Only those who have chosen to receive Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior will be considered for membership.

Note: All candidates shall be strongly encouraged to become actively involved in a ministry, as well as regularly attend and support the church. Living faith in Christ, however, is the only requirement for membership at Living Hope.

- E. All acceptable candidates will be presented to the church for approval at a membership meeting.

2. Termination of membership church membership shall be terminated:

- A. upon death of the individual
- B. at the request of the individual
- C. automatically, upon the individual's moving from the Dixon area, unless special arrangements are made with the elders
- D. if any person has been absent for twelve months and no communication has been made with the church. The elders shall attempt to contact the individual, but if contact is not made, the individual shall be dismissed from membership.
- E. by the church as the third step of discipline (see Mt. 18:15 20).

3. Discipline the procedure for discipline shall proceed as outlined in Mt. 18:15 20:

- A. discipline may be initiated by any member due to a biblical grievance.
- B. if the person under question does not see the matter as one in which discipline is required or the person is unrepentant, one of the elders shall meet with both parties.
- C. if the elder affirms that the offense warrants discipline and the person under discipline remains unrepentant, then the matter shall be brought before the church membership.
- D. the church may revoke membership with a 75% vote

Note: the goal of discipline is repentance and restoration. Because of this, upon repentance, the disciplined individual should be restored immediately to membership.

Article V Government

The government of Living Hope recognizes the various areas of responsibility and authority given to the membership and the elders of the local church. This relationship is a partnership in which the various groups have different spheres of authority.

1. The membership assembled in a duly convened meeting shall have the authority in the following areas:

- A. the selection, affirmation and dismissal of elders as otherwise provided in this article
- B. the approval of the annual church budget
- C. the purchase or sale of land and buildings
- D. the approval of the reception of all new members and the dismissal of current members for disciplinary reasons
- E. the approval of all amendments to this constitution
- F. the affirmation of all delegates and alternates to Evangelical Free Church District and/or National Conferences.

2. The Elder Board

- A. The Qualifications of Elders
 - i. Qualifications An elder shall be an active member of the church and meet the qualifications of I Tim. 3:1 7 and Tit. 1:5 9.
- B. The Function and Priorities of Elders
 - i. To keep right with God (Acts 20:28 and I Pet. 5:2)
 - ii. To feed and protect the flock (Acts 20:28 John 21:15 17)
 - iii. To pray and study (Acts 6:4)

iv. To be free from self interest (Acts 20:33 and I Peter. 5:2)

C. Authority and Responsibilities of Elders

- i. The elders shall be entrusted with the responsibility to oversee all areas of congregational life (I Tim. 5:17) not specifically reserved for the membership in Article V, Section 1. They shall, in the physical absence of the Chief Shepherd (our Lord Jesus Christ), strive to equip the congregation to minister so that the church may be built up in Christ likeness and unity (Eph. 4:11-16).

D. Procedure for Elder Affirmation

- i. The membership shall be notified that there are openings on the elder board and asked to nominate men whom they feel are suited for this position
- ii. Any nominee who receives more than one nomination will then be contacted by the existing elder board. Such nominees will be informed of the responsibilities and rewards of the position and asked if they would like to continue in the selection process. The elders will take special care at this stage to insure that the nominees agree with the doctrinal position of the church and are prepared to defend that position. Nominees will also be asked to read the church's constitution and agree to uphold it.
- iii. All nominees, if there are no unresolved objections, shall be affirmed to serve as an elder by a 75% positive vote from the membership in a membership meeting.
- iv. There will be a corporate recognition of an approved nominee emphasizing his role as a servant leader and the membership's responsibility to submit to the elder's prescribed authority.

E. Removal of Elders Elders may be removed from office by:

- i. Withdrawal from membership
- ii. Voluntary resignation
- iii. Failure to receive a 75% positive reaffirmation
- iv. Early Reconsideration of Elders In the unlikely event that an elder be deemed derelict in his responsibilities, 10% of the membership, but not less than 5 members, can petition the elder board for an early reconsideration of that leader. Failure to receive a 75% reaffirmation will result in the removal of this leader from his responsibilities.

F. Term of Service Elders shall serve three year terms. A 75% positive vote is required to continue in service as an elder for a second term. After two terms, a one year break is required.

G. Pastor(s)

- i. All elders are to be considered pastors. However, according to I Tim. 5:17-18, one or more elders may be set aside to devote full time to preaching and teaching. Of these salaried pastors, one shall be primarily

responsible for the pulpit ministry of the church and the training of the other elders.

- ii. Selection of the salaried pastor(s) The general procedure for the selection of a pastor(s) shall be the same as for the other elders. Candidates shall be reviewed by the elders and affirmed by the a 75% positive vote of the membership in a membership meeting.
- iii. Dismissal of salaried pastor(s) - any pastor may be dismissed by the elder board if any pastor is derelict in his duties. However, reasonable use of discipline, accountability and challenge should be exhausted before any dismissal.
- iv. Pastoral Review In addition to congregational evaluation and reaffirmation every three years, salaried pastor(s) shall be reviewed by the elders annually.
- v. The elders may hire and dismiss staff for nonpastoral positions without congregational approval.

Article VI Meetings

1. Annual Membership Meeting

- A. The Annual Membership meeting of the church shall be held during the month of May with notification of the membership as detailed in Article VI, Number 3. The fiscal year shall end on April 30.
- B. The elder board, pastor and other ministry groups determined by the elders shall prepare a report of the year for the church which will be presented at this meeting.

2. Special Meetings

- A. Special meetings may be called by the elders in order to deal with any matters of urgency or seek the participation of the membership in establishing the direction of the church.
- B. Special meetings must be called promptly by the elders upon petition by 10% of the membership, but not less than 5 members.

3. Publication of Meetings - Special meetings must be publicized in the church's weekly bulletin for two weeks prior to the meeting date.

Article VII Quorum

- 1. Quorum shall be 20% of the membership
- 2. A 75% positive vote will be required to affirm decisions specified under Article V, Section 1.

Article VIII Affiliation

Living Hope Church is affiliated with the Evangelical Free Church of America and shall send delegates to their conferences, support their missions and unite in all mutual efforts for the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ in the measure that the church itself may officially decide.

Article IX
Church Property

1. The church shall have the power to receive, either by gift or purchase, and to hold such real, personal, or mixed property as is authorized by the laws of the State of California and as is deemed necessary for the business of the Church, and shall be in the name of the Church.
2. In case of a division in the Church (from which we pray God by His mercy to preserve us), the property of the Church shall belong to those who abide by its Constitution.
3. In case of dissolution of the Church organization, the property shall be assigned to the Western District of the Evangelical Free Church to enable said conference to renew the work or use the values thereof for furthering Gospel enterprises. The church shall be considered dissolved if so decided by the organization, or when the Church has not held an annual meeting for three years, or when less than six members remain.

Article VIII
Amendments

1. The membership may make changes in this constitution which may seem necessary. Changes will be voted on in any membership meeting which meets the criteria for the quorum. Changes will be adopted if they receive a 75% positive vote.
2. Article II can only be amended by a 100% positive vote of the entire membership.