

Church Planting Residency

Vision

Living Hope Church was planted in 2007 in Southern York County, Pennsylvania by a core group of families and the current lead pastor. As a congregation of about 100 families and an average Sunday attendance of 200, God's grace has enabled us to grow and thrive in our unique context as a "small-town, rural-suburb" between York and Baltimore. We've been blessed by a long-term partnership with the local YMCA where we hold Sunday morning worship. We're excited about our investment in the construction of their new gymnasium which is being outfitted as our new worship center.

In 2017, Living Hope joined the Acts 29 North Atlantic Network to obtain encouragement and accountability, ministry collaboration, church planting resources, and to seal the long-term identity of the church. Jesus calls his followers to proclaim the Gospel, make disciples, and build his church, so we've committed 10% of our annual income toward church planting in partnership with Acts 29. With secularism on the rise, churches closing, and the lost in desperate need of the Gospel, there is a great need for healthy churches all over the world and in our region. Annually in America, about 4,000 churches close their doors, 4,500 church are planted, and an additional 2,000 new churches are needed just to keep up with population growth. This residency program will provide the opportunity for the pastors, elders, and congregation to be directly involved in training, resourcing, and supporting a new church in our region or elsewhere.

Goals

- **External:** To host, train, and invest in a young pastor, so that he might be equipped to raise up leaders, plant a church, and make disciples.
- **Internal:** To be a part of planting a new church so that the leaders and congregation of Living Hope have the joy, challenge, and privilege of investing time, energy, money, and people in the crucial work of church planting.

Residency Logistics

- **Sources:** Residency candidates could come from qualified men within the congregation, referrals from Acts 29, and like-minded churches and seminaries.
- **Commitment:** The commitment will typically be 18-24 months depending on the planter's previous experience. The residency program could be anywhere from 20-40 hours a week, depending on how many additional work hours are needed outside the church.
- **Planting Area:** We would support an effort to plant locally in Central PA or another area outside of our region where the church planter feels called to go.

- **Funding:** The resident will receive a stipend from LHC of \$1,000/month. The resident should be prepared to fundraise to supplement his income during the residency and carry over this funding into the church plant. [Reliant](#) ministry is a recommended resource for support-raising. The resident should also be open to adding to his income with a part-time job if needed (contacts in the congregation can help with this).
- **Housing:** Church will assist with finding a place to live, which (depending on needs) may include housing with someone in the church.
- **Evaluation:** In addition to ongoing informal feedback, there will be a formal ministry evaluation by the elders after the first 3 months and at regular 6 month intervals from the start date. These evaluations will be used to sharpen the resident and be sure there is alignment as the residency continues. Evaluations will be based on the content in this overview and the “Leaders & Staff Expectations & Procedures.”
- **Outcome:** Regardless of the outcome of the residency, we anticipate numerous blessings both for the resident and the local church. Various outcomes are possible. The resident could be approved and sent-out to plant from Living Hope Church with Acts 29, the resident could decide to plant through another avenue with better alignment, or the church and resident could decide together not to pursue church planting as a next step.

Candidate Profile

- **Experience:** The candidate should have, or be working toward, a college or seminary degree in ministry and also have proven ministry experience in a local church.
- **Qualities:** Passionate, driven, energetic, humble, gentle, teachable, flexible; a faithful disciple who loves Jesus and his family; a gatherer who invests in relationships and can build a team; a hard-worker willing to work behind the scenes; an organized planner who takes initiative; a Gospel-centered preacher who teaches the Word effectively.
- **Alignment:** We’ll look for alignment in the following 6 key areas:
 - Confession – affirm our Expanded Doctrinal Statement with room for clarification.
 - Character – mature in his relationship with Christ and dedicated to his wife and family (if applicable).
 - Capacity – able to devote the necessary time and energy to the residency.
 - Competence – equipped with prophetic, priestly, and kingly giftings.
 - Chemistry – healthy interpersonal skills, connects well with LHC pastors.
 - Culture – fits with culture of LHC and the local community.
- **Competencies:** The candidate will engage in self-assessment, dialogue, and evaluation on each of the [Acts 29 Competencies](#) for church planting: Spiritual Vitality, Theological Clarity, Conviction & Commendation, Marriage, Relationships, Leadership, Maturity, Missional Lifestyle, Disciple Making, Ability to Teach, Entrepreneurial Aptitude.

Residency Program

- **Phase 1: Personal Development** (*main focus in first 3 months and ongoing*)
 - **Devotional Life:** Pray regularly for yourself, family, current ministry, and future church plant. Spend daily time in the Word for personal nourishment.
 - **Congregation:** Invest in the life of the church, getting to know the people and the culture. Attend a Discovering Living Hope Class and be active in Sunday worship and a Life Group.
 - **Accountability:** Meet every-other-week with the pastor, monthly with associate pastor, and every six months with each lay elder for relationship building, ministry evaluation, personal encouragement, and to assess calling. If married, meet monthly with a mature married couple assigned from the congregation.
 - **Network Connection:** Attend Acts 29 Central PA gatherings and the annual North Atlantic Gathering. Meet once with each of the Acts 29 pastors in Central PA (and other identified planters in your target area) for a half-day of learning and assessment.
 - **Training:** Complete our 8-session Elder Training Course and bi-annual church leadership trainings. Work through the videos, reading, and self-assessment for each of the Acts 29 Church Planting Competencies. Read and report on assigned books in the areas of personal spirituality, theology, church leadership, and church planting.
 - **Education:** Depending on the planter's previous theological education, the resident may be asked to complete our "Theology in Life" course through Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology and/or complete additional theological education through a seminary or other online avenue.

- **Phase 2: Ministry Development** (*main focus in middle 9-15 months*)
 - **Prophetic Ministry Development**
 - **Teach:** Teach in the following contexts: children's classes (2/year), youth group (4/year), discipleship seminars (1/year)
 - **Preach:** Preach biblically grounded, Gospel-centered messages in Sunday morning worship (4/year).
 - **Lead:** Participate in weekly worship services through call to worship, community news, prayer, etc.
 - **Plan:** Lay-out a 12-week expositional sermon series and a 6-week topical sermon series, including series title and summary and weekly titles and summaries.
 - **Priestly Ministry Development**
 - **Young Adults:** Work with lay leaders to coordinate and attend monthly fellowship activities with Dynamic (college and career group).
 - **Life Group:** Attend and co-facilitate a Life Group (weekly small group).
 - **Counseling:** Sit-in on counseling sessions with the pastor when appropriate.
 - **Discipleship:** Meet regularly with identified youth, young adults, or young married couples for discipleship and encouragement.

- **Evangelism:** Identify a specific area of involvement in the YMCA or local community to build relationships, serve the community, and spread the Gospel.
 - **Kingly Ministry Development**
 - **Collaborate:** Attend weekly staff meetings and monthly leadership meeting. Facilitate 1 leadership meeting a year.
 - **Coordinate:** Facilitate ministry opportunities in the following areas: Children's Outreach (1/year), Youth Group (2/year), Sunday Worship (4/year). This will include overseeing a team of ministry volunteers.
 - **Plan:** Develop and write out a strategy for identifying, recruiting, training, and empowering leaders in the church at all levels (i.e. small group leaders, ministry coordinators, deacons, elders, etc.).
- **Phase 3: Planting Preparation** *(main focus in last 6 months)*
 - **Assessment:** Complete the Acts 29 assessment process and work toward fulfilling any assigned conditions.
 - **Target Area:** Identify the target location for the church plant, meet with church and community leaders, and learn about the area. If planting in a YMCA, begin investing in the staff and membership.
 - **Vision:** Write out a case statement for planting in this area, including why a new church is needed, vision for the church, strategy for planting, and projected timeline.
 - **Context Evaluation:** Work through the unique culture and context of your target area. Consider how the experience you gained in your prophetic, priestly, and kingly ministry development will need to be adapted and adjusted to fit the context of your target area.
 - **Launch Team:** Engage a strategy to develop a launch team, such as establishing small group meeting in the target area (if in the local region). Plan out what types of leaders and skill sets will be needed on a successful launch team. Cast vision and sow seeds with targeted people in the congregation and beyond that might be part of a launch team. Establish a timeline for crucial steps, such as: launch meetings, leadership development, public launch, church membership, etc.
 - **Sending:** Upon successful completion of the residency, approval through Acts 29 assessment, and the approval of the LHC elders, the resident will be ordained and sent-out to plant a church.
- **Phase 4: Follow-Up & Oversight** *(after completion of residency)*
 - **Oversight:** If the resident is sent-out to plant with Living Hope, a mutually agreed upon follow-up plan will be developed for ongoing financial support, ministry oversight, and accountability.
 - **Follow-Up:** If the resident is not immediately planting a church, a mutually agreed upon follow-up plan will be developed to maintain a beneficial relationship.