

Church Planting Residency Overview

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 200 families and an average Sunday attendance of 250, 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.

In 2017, Living Hope joined the Acts 29 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 24 months depending on the planter's previous experience. The residency program will be an investment of about 15-20 hours per week, depending on other life circumstances and work needs.
- **Planting Area:** We are currently looking to plant a church in another areas of Southern York County to accommodate our growing church and reach our growing area.
- **Funding:** The resident will receive a part-time stipend and will need to earn or fundraise other income. Fundraising for the residency can be a strategic way to build a base for the future church plant. We recommend [Reliant](#) ministry as a resource for support-raising.

- **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:** We anticipate numerous blessings both for the resident and the local church regardless the exact outcome. The resident could be approved and sent-out to plant from Living Hope Church with Acts 29, the resident could decide to plant with another network, 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 theology/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 7 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 - shared values and ministry approach of LHC and the local community.
 - Confirmation - affirmation from wife, mentors, and elders for this calling.
- **Competencies:** The candidate will engage in self-assessment, reading, instruction, 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 (months 1-3, 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, get to know the people, and learn the culture. We faithful to attend the Sunday Gathering, a Life Group, a Visitor Welcome, and Church Membership Class.
- **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 annual regional events. 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 10-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 related to personal spirituality, theology, church leadership, and church planting.
- **Education:** Depending on the planter's previous theological education, the resident may be asked to work through Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology and/or complete additional theological education through a seminary or other online avenue.

Phase 2: Ministry Development (months 4-18)

- **Prophetic Ministry Development**
 - **Children/Youth:** Support existing pastors and leaders to regularly teach with children and youth ministry (monthly).
 - **Preach:** Preach biblically grounded, Gospel-centered messages in Sunday morning worship (every-other-month).
 - **Teach:** Help the pastors teach discipleship seminars and ministry leader's training (3/year).
 - **Lead:** Participate in weekly worship services through call to worship, community news, prayer, etc. (1/month).
 - **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 bi-monthly staff meetings and bi-monthly leadership meeting; help facilitate as appropriate.
 - **Coordinate:** Facilitate ministry opportunities in the following areas: Children's Outreach, Youth Group, Sunday Worship. This will include overseeing a team of ministry volunteers (every-other-month).
 - **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 (months 12-24)

- **Assessment:** Complete the Acts 29 assessment process and work toward fulfilling any assigned conditions (end of year 1).
- **Target Area:** Identify the target location for the church plant, meet with church and community leaders, learn the area, and begin investing in the community.
- **Prospectus:** Develop a case 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.
- **Fundraising:** Develop a budget and fundraising strategy, and begin sending newsletters to friends and family, and making visits to local churches.
- **Launch Team:** Develop a strategic plan to gather and build a launch team from the congregation and others in the target area. Plan out what types of leaders and skill sets will be needed on a successful launch team. Begin small group meetings to cast vision and train. Establish a timeline for crucial steps, such as: team 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.