

## Listening Session Q & A

1. Voting by proxy- Bylaw 1.4, can this be done?
  - a. LWC has never allowed voting by proxy, under the current or proposed Constitution and Bylaws, so this is not a change. We have always felt that participating in the discussions that accompany any vote is critical to the vote. However, the Committee is recommending that we allow “virtual attendance” with adequate (2 weeks) notice to the office.
2. Bylaw 6 Bus Ops- exceeding 10% - of budget or threshold?
  - a. This is not a change to the current practice. We have an “emergency fund” as part of the budget for any large, unanticipated needs (e.g. the furnace fails in January)
3. Which team/elder is responsible for taking church to next level, year by year? How will this model benefit short and long term?
  - a. Good question! In reality, all are! All are called to adhere to Matthew 28, the Great Commission. In addition, Bylaw 7a says that the Board of Elders are “To be responsible, along with the pastoral staff, for the visioning, development and execution of the total mission of this congregation, for the setting of goals and priorities, and for evaluating the churches activities in light of the LWC mission and goals.
  - b. We also believe that the spirit-directed vision of the Senior Pastor is critical for the life of a church. The elders are prepared and excited to work and lead alongside a new pastor to support this vision.
  - c. The model greatly enhances communication, increases unity, streamlines decision making, provides for conflict resolution, and provides increased accountability and transparency at all levels of leadership
4. You need to have a separate section on how to hold leaders, volunteers and congregations responsible.
  - a. Methods of accountability are stated throughout the documents. For instance, Bylaw 5.5.e gives the congregation the ability to remove an elder, should that become necessary. There has never been such a provision in our current governing documents. The Board of Elders maintains accountability for the Senior Pastor (Bylaw 5.7.b). There are other accountability methods throughout the document
5. Who is the administrator? What is Lyn’s title?
  - a. LWC has had many different levels of paid staff over the years. At one point we had a full-time Senior Pastor, full-time Administrator, part-time Secretary, full-time Youth Pastor, part-time Worship Leader, part-time Sound Technician, and part-time Custodian. We did not want this document to be limiting to the staff level that we currently have. Therefore, any reference to

## Listening Session Q & A

“administrator” was written as “current office administrator or equivalent staff position.”

- b. Lyn’s title has the discrepancy that her job offer was “Administrative Assistant” but her line in the budget is “Office Administrator”. I believe “Office Administrator” is the more commonly used title. Regardless, LWC wouldn’t function without her, please give her a hardy “thanks” next time you see her!
6. Why isn’t LCMC and ARC membership in the constitutional? Are we members?
- a. The Constitution and Bylaw Review Committee didn’t feel that the Constitution was the correct place for the church affiliations. As an analogy, NATO is the US’s most significant and important alliance – but there is no mention of NATO in the US Constitution! We have NOT changed the fact that the congregation has the power to “Adopt or terminate its official affiliation with any denomination, ministry association or organization” (Chapter 3.4.e)
  - b. Removing the names of affiliations from the Constitution does NOT remove the affiliation! Yes, we are still members of the LCMC, as well as the ARC. We have had little engagement with the ARC over the past decade. However, I have reached out to them and they have offered some resources for our next Senior Pastor to get us reconnected!
7. What is the guarantee that the constitution and bylaws will be followed?
- a. The guarantee is simply the up and down accountability which is enhanced in this proposal
8. Is Bruce still an Elder?
- a. While this question is not related to the proposal at hand, yes, Bruce is still an Elder in accordance with our current Bylaws, Bylaw 5.2. He is also an Ordained Pastor of Living Water Church
9. If passed, is everyone to step down? When?
- a. The motion is to vote on the proposal on November 16<sup>th</sup>, with an implementation date of the January 2026 Annual Meeting. At that point, if this proposal passes, all leaders would be voted in. There is no “grandfather clause” for current leaders. That implementation date also gives time for Leadership to prepare for the changes!
10. Will the Constitution and Bylaws be voted on separately? Will Amendments be allowed the day of the Special Meeting?
- a. Because they are dependent upon one another, the proposal will be voted on via one motion. Since amendments to the Constitution require a higher standard of approval: three-quarters of members present versus two-thirds

## Listening Session Q & A

for the Bylaws, the entire proposal will be submitted for approval at the higher standard, three-quarters.

- b. In accordance with our Bylaws, the Special Meeting will adhere to Robert's Rules of Order, which allow amendments to the motion. (Bylaw 1.7)

### 11. How will pastor performance review take place?

- a. The Board of Elders is responsible for pastoral performance reviews. The method of that review is not specified in the Bylaws, however, the fact that the review has been accomplished will be required to be communicated to the congregation under this proposal

### 12. If doesn't pass, will current elders still be elders?

- a. Yes. They were all confirmed by the congregation in accordance with our current Constitution and Bylaws. However, Bruce has announced that he will be stepping down from the Board of Elders sometime between this vote and the January Annual Meeting.

### 13. Where does the background of this new proposed come from?

- a. This structure is a common structure across church and para-church organizations. Presbyterian Churches, Evangelical Free Churches, and many other churches use this structure as it enhances communication and accountability
- b. It should also be noted that while the term "Elder-led" has been used frequently, this proposal is really a "blended Congregational/Elder-led" structure. Another way to look at it would be "representative government" at the congregation level. The congregation has significant authority and responsibility to choose their Elders, Business Operations Team members, Nominating Team members and Senior Pastor wisely.

### 14. LCMC and ARC- why were these removed from Constitution, are they in the Articles of Incorporation?

- a. See question 6 above. Phil Koenig will review to the Articles of Incorporation, but does not believe they are listed there.
- b. The Review Committee did not feel that which organizations we are affiliated is a Constitutional issue (see question 6 above). The question is then, where is the appropriate place to name our affiliations? The LWC Website, LWC brochure, and Annual Meeting are all appropriate places; there are likely others.
- c. It was asked "if the LCMC is removed from the Constitution, what's to say that our affiliation won't be forgotten?" Turning the question around, the ARC **is** listed in our Constitution and has largely been forgotten (hopefully that will be changing, see question 6 above again!). The point being, that inclusion in our Constitution does not in any way guarantee that an affiliation isn't forgotten, especially since the Constitution and Bylaws are rarely read by the members of the congregation.

## Listening Session Q & A

15. "Inc." is added on the proposed document's front page. Are we going with "LWC Inc." now?
  - a. For the legal document of our Constitution, "Inc." should be included. That does not mean that it must be included in communications with the community, nor do we expect that it will be.
16. It appears the power of one thing is taken away in another way- e.g. congregation has the power to call a pastor, yet the elders have the power to call an interim. E.g. congregation may sell property, but bylaws give power to the elders. E.g. merger used as another example.
  - a. The only actual "power" that has been added to Leadership responsibilities from our current Constitution and Bylaws is the ability for the Board of Elders to call an Interim Pastor. This was added as a response to the most recent situation we had, where Pastor Sean resigned suddenly and unexpectedly. In order to call an Interim Pastor, the Board of Elders had to call a Special Meeting of the Congregation to vote on whether an Interim Pastor should be called, with 30 day's notice. Add in time for the Elders to pray, discuss, and decide, and the Special Meeting was really held ~6 weeks later. Only then could an Interim Pastor Call Committee be *formed* and the search begun. Since it was very clear that an Interim Pastor was needed, the Board of Elders should have the limited ability to make that decision and initiate a search for an Interim Pastor immediately.
17. Safe Environment- if there is sexual misconduct, who does one notify? Pastor? Then pastor notifies insurance company?
  - a. This is not a significant change from the current procedures. The pastor can be notified, or any member of the Board of Elders. The Insurance company would be notified by the Elder Chair of the Business Operations Team or his or her designated representative, which is very similar to how our current structure would operate.
18. Is the Pastor an Elder? Voting rights?
  - a. The Senior Pastor is an Elder, with voting rights, as is currently the case. That has not changed under this proposal.
  - b. This is a good time to point out that the Board of Elders really doesn't "vote" on issues! We pray, discuss, and strive to reach consensus. We believe that if God is guiding us, we **will** reach consensus! To the best of my knowledge, within the Board of Elders the only item that has been voted on in the past is which Elder will be the Head Elder. All other issues are dealt with through prayer and discussion.
19. Policies and procedures- no updates in years.
  - a. Actually, all policies and procedures have been updated in the past few years. Gina Fischer for one spent many many hours updating them! However, if this proposal passes, all policies and procedures will need to be reviewed and updated.
20. Where does the call for spiritual unity come from?

## Listening Session Q & A

- a. I'm not 100% certain what this question is asking. The call for Spiritual Unity comes from God as described in many Scripture verses calling for Unity in the Body. We believe this proposal give a more "life-giving" structure to the church, without the inherent conflict that is built into the current structure.
  - b. This is also a good time to point out that the current structure was **not** devised to provide "checks and balances" but rather as a division of labor. Under the "Congregational Council" that we had when the church was founded, the "tyranny of the urgent" matters of rent, insurance, salaries, purchasing of supplies, chairs, desks, etc. had the unintended effect that the 'church stuff' – the ministry of Living Water, the reason God called us together, never got addressed! The two-board solution was intended to divide the duties such that the "non-profit corporation" duties were handled by one group, and the "spiritual aspects" were handled by another. Unfortunately, conflict resolution, communication, and unity were not addressed, and as a result we have not had a "life-giving" structure.
21. Is Ministry Board and Ministry Team the same thing?
- a. Yes. We are recommending a "team" approach. The functions of the Ministry Team remain the same. The new Elders would like to see the Ministry Team enhanced further, with involvement for instance from the Worship Team and other ministries that are often not represented.
22. What is the plan for Business Operations Team changeover?
- a. See question 9 above. The implementation date for the proposal, should it pass, is the Annual Meeting in January 2026.
23. Is Head Elder permanent or rotated?
- a. This has not changed under this proposal. The Head Elder is chosen by the current sitting Elders. Current Bylaw 5.5, proposed Bylaw 5.6
24. Are there term limits?
- a. Yes, there are term limits for the Board of Elders, the Business Operations Team and the Nominating Team. See proposed Bylaws 5.3, 6.10 and 7.2
25. Communication- e.g. petitioners should submit their petition to whom?
- a. To the Board of Elders.
26. Membership- how will that play out?
- a. Our current Bylaws (3.5.e) state that a member may be removed from the membership roll due to inactivity, which is determined as the church having no record of attendance or giving over the time frame of one year. This standard is one that we have *no means of applying!* We do not keep attendance, and giving may be done via the "Treasury Boxes" which would leave no record. In addition, a member may have signed their Membership Covenant years ago and not even remember what it is that they agreed to as a member! By re-signing the member covenant at or leading up to the annual meeting, we solve both problems: we remember what we're promising, and we know that we are a member. In addition, we added proposed verbiage to ensure that the Board of Elders is involved before anyone is removed (or considered to be removed) from membership, and no one will be removed

## Listening Session Q & A

without being contacted. This also precludes shut-ins or those suffering long-term illness from being removed from membership. We also clarified the means through which a youth member becomes a voting member upon reaching the age of eighteen in this proposal.

27. Church discipline- what does that mean?

- a. In our current documents, the Board of Elders is responsible for Spiritual Discipline, Bylaw 5.6.h. However, there is no description of what discipline is, what warrants discipline, or what the philosophy of Spiritual Discipline is! This proposal clarifies those areas, with Scriptural references, and an emphasis that “church discipline is seen as a loving and restorative act intended to call believers back to holiness and unity.” See proposed Bylaw 5.7.i. The emphasis is upon “loving and restorative.”

28. How do you plan to handle conflict that may arise from previous structure?

- a. The fact that the proposal, if passed, would not be implemented until the January 2026 Annual Meeting, and that all new offices would be voted on at that time should alleviate conflict. If there are lingering conflicts from the past, the Board of Elders are always open to hearing from any member

29. What is the next step/process after the completion of the listening sessions?

- a. Gather these questions and respond to them! Continue to answer questions that may arise; any questions or concerns can be directed to Bruce or any member of the Constitution and Bylaw Review Committee, or any Elder. Notification of the meeting has been sent out via mail, Splash, and Sunday Morning announcement, therefore all notifications have been met. We encourage the congregation to thoroughly review these documents, ask any remaining questions, pray fervently, and attend the Special Meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 11am, following the single worship service to be held at 9:30am.

30. Can amendments be sought at specially called meetings? What is that process?

- a. See question 10 above. Per Robert’s Rules of Order, amendments to the proposal may be presented during the discussion time after the motion has been made.

31. Is there a plan to have an attorney review the document?

- a. Yes, Bruce is meeting with an attorney on October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

32. Accountability- where are the checks and balances within the Elders?

- a. See proposed Bylaw 5.5. Of note, under our current Bylaws there is no provision for the congregation to remove an Elder! That has been addressed in this proposal, and an Elder, who is first elected by the congregation, may also be removed by the congregation.

33. How does a member approach the elders?

- a. This is not stipulated in either the current or proposed documents. There are too many variables! Any member may request time to speak at a Board of Elders meeting. An Elder may be approached individually. Elders can be emailed, either individually or as a group, or an email may be sent to the Office Administrator to be forwarded on to the Elders. Of note, the Board of

## Listening Session Q & A

Elders schedule is now being published, and minutes from meetings will now be made available to the congregation (proposed Bylaw 5.7.n)

34. Where does the worship aspect fall into the structure?

- a. By enhancing communication, unity, accountability, transparency, and providing means of conflict resolution and clarity, LWC can focus on our mission as a church.

35. What is the pastoral care ministry?

- a. Proposed Bylaw 3.7.d, Membership, refers to “a pastoral care minister” who will contact the individual being considered for removal from the membership roll. This is another example of the Review Committee attempting to “not tie the hands” by assuming that staffing levels will remain as they are! Note that the words “pastoral care minister” are written in lowercase letters, in other words, it’s not a defined office. At the moment, it would likely fall to the Senior Pastor or an Elder. Prayerfully, our congregation and finances will allow for an Associate Pastor at some point, who might be delegated the task of pastoral care. Bruce, as an Ordained Pastor of LWC does some (and would like to do more) hospital visits and other pastoral care. The point is to not tie our hands, but also ensure that pastoral care is given to our membership.

36. Statement of Faith- new additions are strong and clear but the rest is vague. How did this occur?

- a. The Constitution and Bylaw Review Committee did not believe that it was our purview to alter the Statement of Faith, with two small exceptions. On January 25, 2015, a Bylaw 13 was added to our current Bylaws, stating that LWC will not perform any marriage or marriage-like ceremony involving anything other than the union of one man and one woman. The Review Committee finds that to be a very significant statement of our faith, and so moved it, with some updated verbiage, to the proposed Constitution Statement of Faith. In addition, we noted that nothing in our current Statement affirms the sanctity of life. We therefore proposed adding a statement to that effect. The Review Committee has recommended that the Board of Elders, together with the new Senior Pastor, review the LWC Statement of Faith next year.

37. A member can view church finances. Can members request a church audit?

- a. There is no provision for a member to request an audit, however, the proposed Bylaw 6.16 requires a financial review biennially, with a professional review a minimum of every six years beginning with this revision.